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# Saturday Review

of LITERATURE

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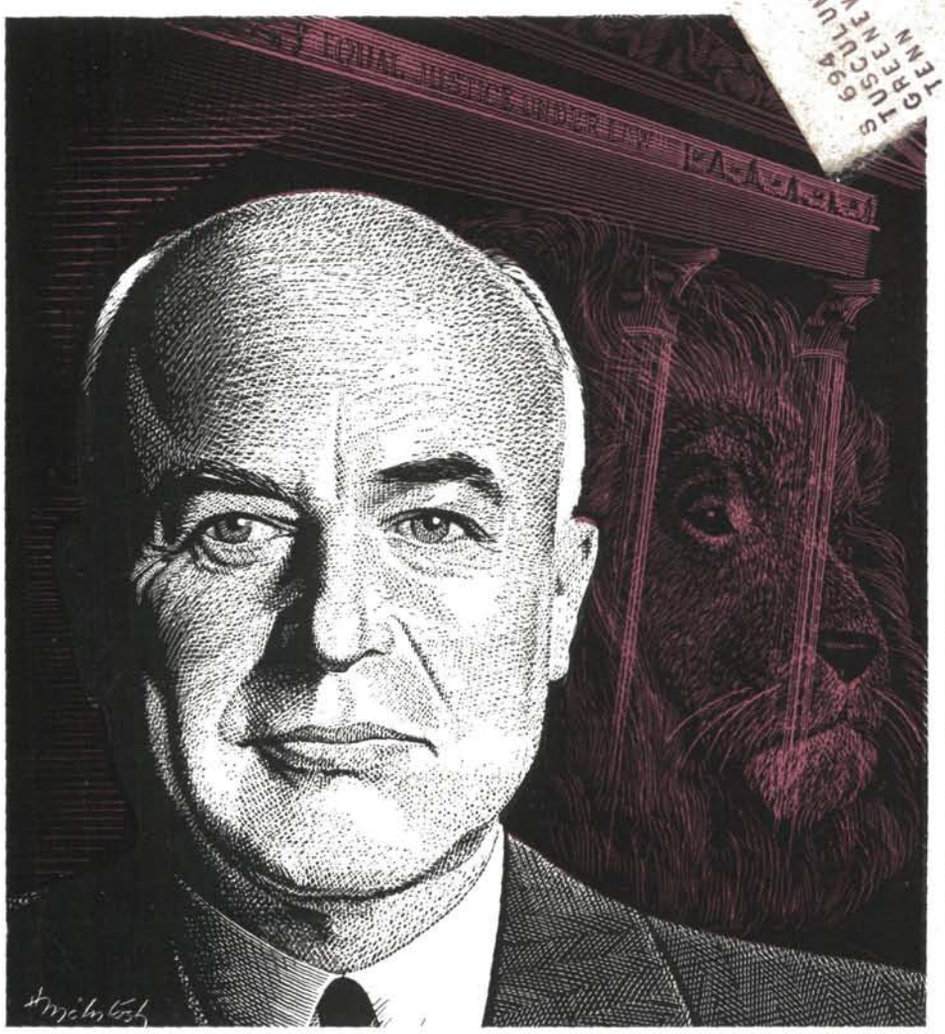


*Charles P. Curtis, Jr., author of "Lions Under the Throne."* *(See page 9)*

## *The Unwritten Classics*

By L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP

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"**THIS is truly a wonderful book** and every civilized reader will enjoy it. Almost never can one lay aside all cavils and say, merely, that a book is sympathetic, absorbing, and valuable. I would so gladly see Mrs. Colum's autobiography high on the list of best sellers."

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This is Mary Colum's story, but it is also the story of Yeats, Lady Gregory, Wilfred Blunt, Moore, Synge, the whole Abbey Theatre group, Joyce, Maud Gonne, Dunsany, Amy Lowell, Bliss Carman and many others, as seen through her wise eyes.

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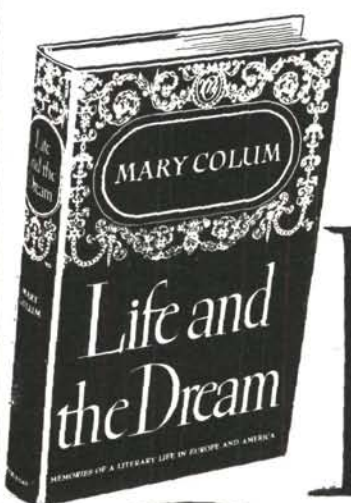


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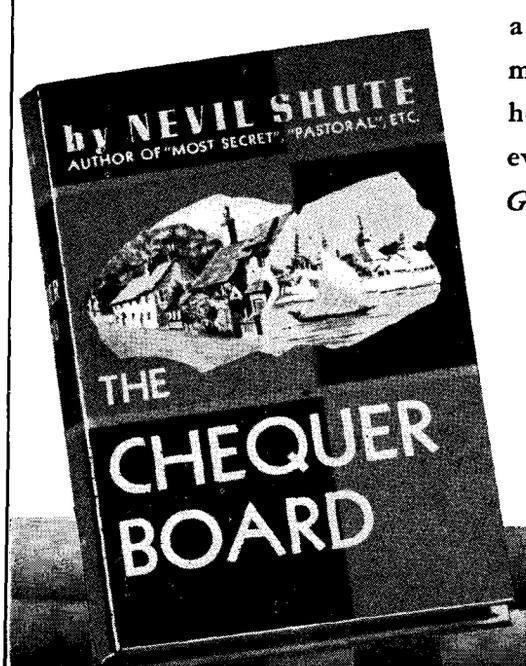


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# TRADE Winds

**THE NAME "RUGGLES"** will bring to most people only the memory of Charles Laughton's performance in Harry Leon Wilson's "Ruggles of Red Gap." New Yorkers, however, have reason to be proud of an actual person with that name—Mr. Samuel B. Ruggles, whose achievements have been chronicled in book form at long last by D. G. Brinton Thompson, and published by the Columbia University Press. Perhaps the best way to introduce the real Ruggles is to start at Union Square, as Allan Nevins does in his introduction to Mr. Thompson's book: "Any New Yorker, and indeed any American, would profit from an historic tour of that section of the city which links Union Square with Gramercy Park. This is the area just north of Hendrick Brevoort's farm, though few know that the bend in Broadway at Tenth Street was made to avoid destruction of the Brevoort homestead. It is an area fragrantly crammed with history. Henry K. Brown's statue of Washington in Union Square stands where on the day of the British evacuation of New York, November 23, 1783, the citizens received the Father of his Country. The central fountain in the square dates from the opening of the Croton water-system. All about lie the sites of residences of famous men—William Cullen Bryant's at 24 West Sixteenth, Washington Irving's at the southwest corner of Seventeenth Street, Bayard Taylor's at 142 East Eighteenth, Horace Greeley's at 35 East Nineteenth, and the birthplace of Theodore Roosevelt at 28 East Twentieth. . . . As it happens, Union Square owed its first formal plan to Samuel B. Ruggles, who in 1832 insisted that the place be properly laid out. Gramercy Park was the handiwork of Ruggles, who in 1831 gave certain trustees forty-two lots for the creation of this delightful spot of greenery. These were but two of the public services of a remarkable man." Ruggles also played a prominent part in the improvement of the Erie Canal, the founding of the Erie Railroad, the Bank of Commerce, and the Astor Library, and the transformation of Columbia from a small college to a powerful university. . . .

### SUCCESS STORY

**By A. C. Spectorsky**

She mentioned it first at breakfast, to her husband.

"I have an idea for a novel," she said.

"Yes?" he said. "That's nice. Would you stick another slice of bread in the toaster, dear?"

When he'd gone off to work she thought about her idea, and the way her husband had dismissed it. She didn't blame him. She'd had ideas before, and never done anything about them. And she wasn't a writer. But this idea seemed really awfully good to her and, with some trepidation, she telephoned an old beau, an advertising man, who, she knew, was acquainted with a book publisher.

"Harry," she said to him, "I've never asked you a favor before, but now there's something I want you to do for me." And she went on to tell him she had an idea for a book and wanted to talk to a publisher about it.

Harry said sure, he knew just the man and, as a matter of fact, was going to have lunch with him, and why didn't she come along and join them.

So she did. It was a wonderful lunch. First they had a few martinis, and then kippers and eggs benedict, with ale. She got quite flushed and happy, and told the publisher her idea. He said he liked it, said he liked it fine. (To himself the publisher thought what a shame it was that this absolute natural of a story idea and plot line had to occur to the mind of an untrained writer. "My Lord," he thought to himself, "I can imagine what Maugham could do with a story like that!")

So they lunched and talked, and she heard a lot of trade gossip, as editors and other publishers stopped by their table to chat. She heard about advances, five, ten, and twelve thousand dollar advances. She heard about movie sales for astronomical sums on the basis of outlines plus one or two chapters. She heard about reprints, magazine serialization, advertising appropriations, condensation in digests, lecture tours. Her head was spinning with the drinks and the heady talk.

The publisher asked her to come back with him to his office. He said he might be able to give her a weekly stipend, for a while, anyway, to see what she could do in the way of an outline and a few sample chapters.

She went with him, to his paneled, lush office, and there she met the magazine editor who had come in to see the publisher. The publisher said to the magazine editor, "Marge, here's a young lady you ought to talk to. She has a terrific idea for a book—it would make a swell three-part serial for *American Woman.*"

So she had to tell the story to Marge, the editor of *American Woman.* Marge took her out for a cocktail then, to hear more about the story, and in the cocktail lounge they met a movie story scout. "Hal," Marge said, "here's a young lady who has an absolutely swell movie story. We're interested and a publisher is interested" (and Marge told Hal the name of the publisher).

They had another round of drinks, and she found herself telling her story to the movie man. "It sounds very interesting indeed," he told her. "Needs tightening up, and I think your best bet would be flash-backs instead of a straight-away story, but you sure have a sound idea there."

This was wonderful, she thought. She didn't know much about the financial side of books, magazines, and movies, but she was morally certain that, at a conservative estimate, she was well into blue-chip territory.

"By the way, darling," Marge said to her, "that gal coming in now is one

"Can the complaints or I'll send you all to Pittsburgh."



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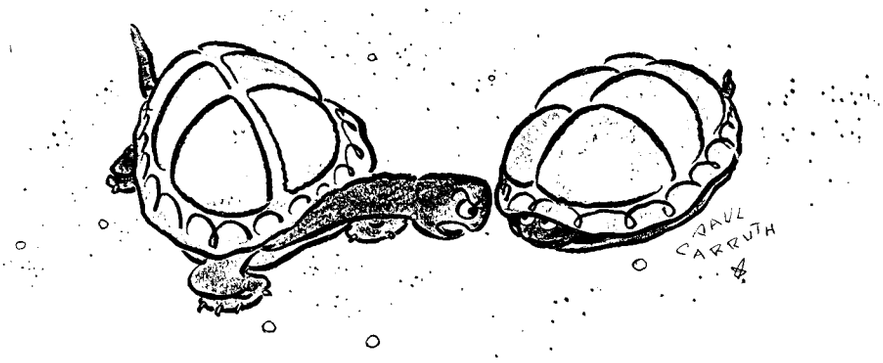


"Come on outside and say that!"

of the hottest, heppest agents in the business. If she handled you, you'd be able to make a swell three-way deal. And she has an infallible sense of timing."

"Absolutely infallible," the movie man said, sagely.

She said, brightly, "Timing's important, isn't it?", not having any but the haziest idea of what timing was.

"Essential," said the movie man.

"Indispensable, darling," said Marge, and ordered another round.

The agent was called over and joined their table. Our heroine told her story again. They had another round of drinks. A columnist came in and sat down with them. "Jerry," Marge said to him, "let me introduce you to your next big scoop. This li'l lady is going to be the hottest author of the year."

They had another round of drinks and she told the columnist the story of her book to be. On this telling, she had the help of Marge, the agent, and the movie man, all of whom had already figured out embellishments and slight changes in the original story. When it was told, the columnist nodded his approval. "Wait, though," Marge said to him. "Here's the payoff. Spray, the publisher, is giving her a terrific advance."

She hadn't known she was getting an advance, nor did she know what a terrific advance was, but by this time she was so happy she didn't stop to think about it, but just kept listening and laughing with the others and enjoying herself.

It was clear to her that everyone else in the bar was impressed by the people she was with. And they, in turn, were impressed with her, weren't they? Therefore . . .

When they left the bar it was dark outside. She gave the driver her address, and then sat back, closing her eyes and hugging herself and smiling happily with warmth and good feeling.

When she got home, she took off her wraps and then ran to look at herself in the mirror. She saw her flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes. She noticed the tilt to her chin, the look of glowing happiness about her face. "Oh, what a wonderful, wonderful day," she said softly, watching her lips say the words. "A three-way deal," she said to herself. "Three-way." She stood there musing until she heard her husband's key in the lock.

At the dinner table, he looked at her appraisingly. "Done any writing on your book yet?" he asked.

"Writing?" she said. "Writing? Oh —er—no, but . . ."

"Would you stick another slice of bread in the toaster, dear?" he said. . . .

**WHITTLESEY HOUSE** will publish an unusual anthology this fall—a collection of stories that deal with the workings of the mind. It will be edited by Mary Aswell of *Harper's Bazaar* and will have a preface and critical notes by Dr. Frederick Wertham, the psychologist who wrote "Dark Legend." . . . Representative selections of the popular humorist Arthur "Bugs" Baer will be published for the first time in book form by Random House. The author will determine the contents of the volume. . . . A young lady in the Holt editorial department spent several lunch hours curled up with a copy of "Dead Souls." Her explanation: "When you've got to Gogol, you've got to Gogol." . . . New Viking Portables: Thoreau, Dante, Conrad, and Johnson and Boswell. . . . Twentieth Century-Fox has discovered it's not such a long way to Tipperary after all. "Anna and the King of Siam" was shown there, and a lady named Anna Monahan promptly popped up to sue the producers for $200,000. Her claim: Anna of Siam was her grandmother, and the son "depicted falsely, maliciously, scandalously, and defamingly in the picture as having died in Siam, unmarried, at a very young age" was, in real life, her own father. What the characterization of her alleged father makes her out to be, she leaves the courts to decide. . . .

**AMERICAN NOTES AND QUERIES** is compiling a list of famous stories that feature modern characters who step into a bygone milieu. Ones that come readily to mind include Twain's "Connecticut Yankee," Jack London's "Star Rover," and Henry James's "Sense of the Past" (basis for John Balderston's play "Berkeley Square"). Can Trade Winds readers suggest others?

Incidentally, I've always wondered why "Berkeley Square" was never made into a musical. That plot, with songs by a Rodgers, Schwartz, or Kurt Weil, couldn't miss!

BENNETT CERF.

# "From where I sit"

THOSE who expect a plot resume in this particular column would be spending their time more profitably trying to find out how things are in Glocamora.

There will be a great many Americans who will read **This Is the Year** by FEIKE FEIKEMA during those months the farmer looks to for a new start, a life renewed. And many of these people, perhaps you among them, will come to feel something of what the farmer feels about life and the earth. I don't just mean things like forking hay and breeding bulls and lighting the kerosene lamp and dancing in the evening. I mean the sense of time—time borne across the land by the wind, jerking when the wind jerks, barren when the wind is so, and hot when it is not. I mean the sense of repetition, of renewal, of the cycle. In the populous parts of our nation, man has so sluttered the earth with his belongings and his mistakes that it is hidden from view and he seldom realizes its existence. And in the farmlands of America, there is the faraway cast of the idea that pierces to the sea as a greener and more moving pasture. I'm a city kid, born and ill-bred, but I think I felt the land in **This Is the Year**. And with FEIKEMA helping, I didn't have to make much effort either.

I have never met FEIKEMA, but I hear he is a giant of a man, nearly six-feet-nine, the shortest of his five brothers being six-feet-three. Born in Iowa, he now lives in Minneapolis, and has had intimate contact with the things he writes about. In **This Is the Year**, he intended to take the reader through the full drama of farming, the full gamut of its successes and failures, and also what he calls "the turn of the wheel of generations." I think he has succeeded.

paul

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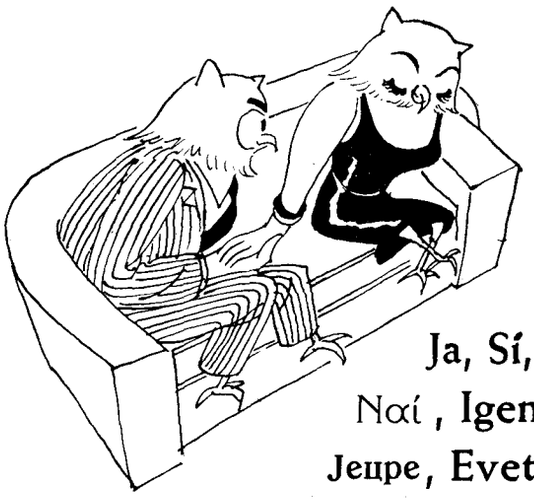

**Ja, Sí, Oui,**
**Ναί, Igen, Да,**
**Jeupe, Evet, Sim**

THERE was this character, Jenny, who kept making up her mind. According to the documentation of popular song, she had learned 27 languages by the time she was 18 and a student at Vassar—which makes her 7 up on the number of languages now available in the Holt Spoken Language Series. However, Jenny had certain serious gaps in her knowledge of spoken language which never trouble people who learn by imitating the native speakers of our recordings. They can say yes, no, and maybe. They can also order a balanced meal when one is available, rent a hotel room when one is vacant, shop around when there are things to buy, and talk their way through all the normal situations of everyday life.

For there is a simple and reasonable way of learning anyone's language: to learn it as a child does, by speaking. Like many simple and reasonable things, this method was considered revolutionary in the extreme until it was successfully adopted on a large scale. Then the Linguistic Society of America and the American Council of Learned Societies created their Intensive Language Program to help win a war. Americans in uniform had to be able to get along in France and Turkey and Burma, and so the language scientists taught them to speak to the people there. By their method, a boatload of U. S. officers were able to speak Chinese by the time they got to China, although none of them knew the language when their ship left the States. A group of students who had studied Finnish for just a few months spent weekends in Finnish-speaking communities and local Finns wanted to adopt them. Another group, who had completed the nine month course in Italian, were acting in Italian plays, ad-libbing in the language when they forgot lines. Not one of these examples is an exception. The records, with accompanying text, were developed for the Armed Forces Institute not for the purpose of dictating military expediencies, but to permit average soldiers to discuss the normal and varied activities of everyday life with the citizens of a foreign country. Speed, accuracy, and practical usefulness were the aims. The records were made by native speakers, and the text for each language was prepared by a top-ranking linguistic specialist.

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Ever since the war, people in schools and universities, and people who thought they'd never go to school again, have been learning to speak and be at home in another tongue because of the concentrated efforts of those specialists in the nature of language who worked to make this series the clearest and most practical of its kind. Records and text can be used by people working in groups with an instructor or by any man or woman studying alone. Jenny, for example, might have been a wow with all her natural aptitude, but *anyone* who can speak one language can learn to speak another. The first and most important thing is to have the best possible instruction you can get. If you can't study in a foreign country under a trained teacher—if you can't afford the services of a native speaker here, and are unable or disinclined to marry one—try the Holt Spoken Language Series. You will never be at a loss for words. A thousand times nein, non, nej, neen, ὄχι, nem, nei, **нет, не**, hayir.

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The Saturday Review of Literature

# The Unwritten Classics

L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP

BETWEEN the wholly real and the wholly unreal books lies a shadow-land of books that are, yet are not: unfinished books, lost books, apocrypha, and pseudepigrapha (falsely attributed books). Most recondite of all are books that were never written, but which exist solely as a title, with perhaps excerpts, in a work of fiction or pseudo-fact. Some of these last have led an active literary career despite the fact that they never existed. These are the unwritten classics.

Let us call these non-books *pseudobiblia*. The oldest known example is the "Book of Thoth" of sinister occult repute. It made its appearance in an Egyptian novel, "The Story of Setnau Khaemuast," which is known from a ptolemaic papyrus but is probably older than the Ptolemies.

According to the novel, the "Book of Thoth" was written by the Ibis-headed god Tehuti (Greek, *Thóth*), the divine scribe and magician. In it were two spells. Recital of the first enabled one to enchant heaven and earth, sea and sky, mountains and rivers, to understand the birds as they flew and the serpents as they crawled, and to call fish to the surface of the water. The second enabled a man dead in his tomb to resume life and to see the sun, the moon, and all the company of the gods. Tehuti enclosed the book in a golden box, and that in a silver box, and that in an ivory and ebony box, and that in a wooden box, and that in a bronze box, and that in an iron box. He bound the iron box with chains, sank it in the Nile, and surrounded it by serpents and scorpions.

There it rested until the wizard Neferkaptah found out about it. Neferkaptah (or Ptahneferka) went to the spot and parted the Nile by magic—that being perhaps the origin of the Moses-Red Sea story. He slew the guardian vermin, opened the boxes, and took the book. To help himself to memorize the spells, he wrote out a copy, washed the ink off the papyrus with beer, and drank the beer.

Tehuti was ordinarily an amiable god, but like a true bibliophile he was incensed by the theft of a limited first edition. He persuaded Ra to drown Neferkaptah's wife and son, and the wizard drowned himself in grief. The book was buried with Neferkaptah at Memphis.

Subsequently another magician, Setnau Khaemuast, a son of Rameses II, heard of the book. He invaded Neferkaptah's tomb by magic. There he found the three ghosts of Neferkaptah and his family living snugly in a room illuminated by the glow from the volume. Setnau demanded the book. Neferkaptah's ghost refused, warned Setnau of unpleasant consequences if he took it, and finally agreed to settle the question by a game of checkers. Setnau won and departed with the book. But Neferkaptah's ghost was not yet beaten. He caused Setnau to fall in love with an evil woman Tabubu, who incited him to kill his own children (or perhaps he dreamed he killed them; translations vary). In the end Setnau was glad to return the book to Neferkaptah, who chuckled: "What did I tell you?"

Like most Egyptian fiction, the "Story of Setnau" disappeared from circulation. It was recovered with the discovery of the papyrus a few decades ago. Western writers of fantasies seized upon the "Book of Thoth" as a natural accessory to their own tales. Lovecraft mentioned it ("Through the Gates of the Silver Key") as having been cited in his own major contribution to pseudobiblia, the abhorred "Necronomicon."

The "Book of Thoth" is a major plot-element in one of Sax Rohmer's

early creepycrawlies, "Brood of the Witch Queen." This is a fine little horrid, full of bats, scorpions, and dark supernatural doings about the Great Pyramid of Gizeh. The villain uses the "Book of Thoth" to send fire-elementals to burn up the heroes. The latter, having escaped broiling, secure and destroy the book. Next time the villain invokes a fire-elemental he is unable to control it, and is burnt to a fine crisp.

PYRAMID Hill is a natural site for stories of unnatural hijinks. If a tenth of the ghastly events of the stories had happened there, you couldn't get a tourist near the place. Even Houdini, despite his anti-supernaturalism crusades, was not above having Lovecraft ghost such a story for him: "Imprisoned with the Pharaohs." This tells, in the characteristic Lovecraftian eldritch-horror style, of Houdini's being seized by a gang of Arabs at night near the Sphinx, and lowered by rope an immense distance down a burial shaft. At the bottom he finds a horde of indescribable monstrosities performing unspeakable obscenities. The story is presented in the guise of a factual memoir by Houdini himself, a regrettable if common type of fakery, since many readers have a hard enough time distinguishing fact from fiction.

It was, no doubt, a book like the "Book of Thoth" that Merlin eloquently describes in Tennyson's "Merlin and Vivien":

> . . . it is but twenty pages long,
> But every page having an ample marge,
> And every marge enclosing in the midst
> A square of text that looks a little blot,
> The text no larger than the limbs of fleas;
> And every square of text an awful charm,
> Writ in a language that has long gone by . . .
> And every margin scribbled, crost, and cramm'd
> With comment, densest condensation, hard



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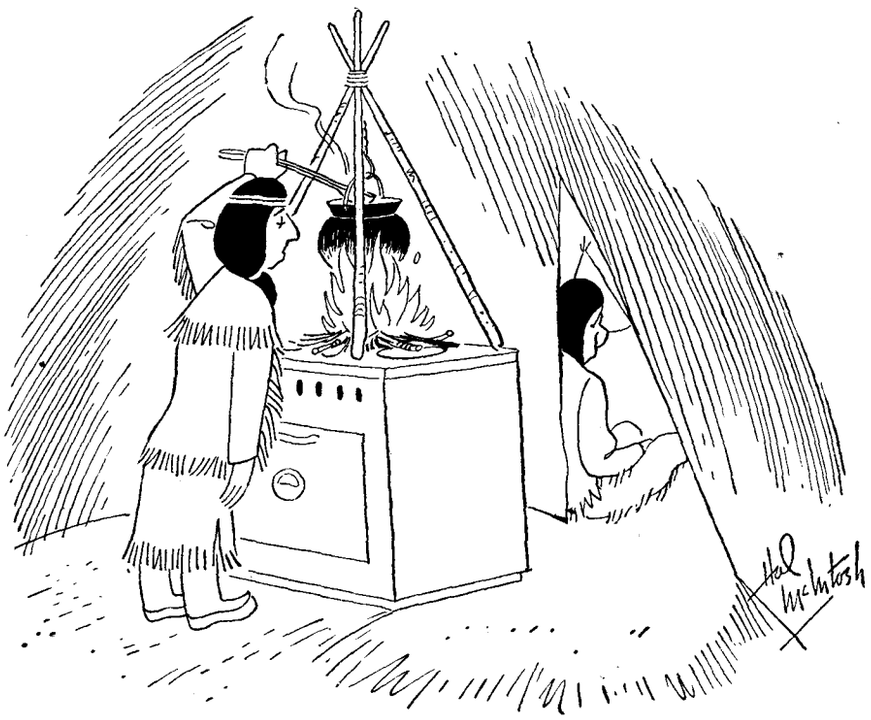

To mind and eye; but the long sleepless nights
Of my long life have made it easy to me . . .

The venerable Ambrose Silvester Merlin has been one of the most ubiquitous characters in fantasy since the time of Geoffrey of Monmouth, but his wonderful little grimoire has yet to be exploited.

Though Tehuti's *magnum opus* was forgotten for two millennia, the god soon found himself credited with enough books to keep even a god-of-letters happy. Egyptian sacerdotal literature (including liturgical, medical, and astrological works) was attributed to him as a matter of course. The syncretic religious movements of Ptolemaic Alexandria resulted in a merger of the Egyptian gods Tehuti and Anpu (Anubis) with the Greek Hermes. Tehuti's honorific epithet was "thrice-great," whence the merged god became known to Graeco-Roman writers as Hermes Trismegistus. Clement of Alexandria describes priests carrying forty-two "books of Hermes" in a procession. To this Thoth-Hermes were attributed collections of syncretistic Alexandrine writings, some of which survive: windy mystical speculations of interest only to professional occultists. Christian and Moslem writers transformed Hermes into a mortal king of Egypt who had reigned about the time of the Flood and had written thousands of books on magic and alchemy. All alchemical works became known as "hermetic," and through alchemy this adjective came into our language with the meaning "air-tight."

The youth of Western civilization produced a multitude of pseudepigrapha, so that medieval literature seems to consist mainly of works by pseudo-Aristotle, pseudo-Aquinas, and other distinguished pseudos. Occult and magical works were credited to Enoch, Solomon, Toz Graecus (our old friend Tehuti), and Roger Bacon (who in his proper person wrote "The Nullity of Magic"). There was at least one unwritten work: "The Three Imposters." This was supposed to be a ghastly atheistic blasphemy, the imposters being Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. It was credited to various independent thinkers, including Emperor Frederick II and Spinoza.

PERHAPS the most influential unwritten classic of modern times was Mme. Blavatsky's "Book of Dzyan." We are told that "dzyan" (pronounced "John") means "self-reform by meditation and knowledge." This book purported to be an ancient work of occult wisdom, apparently in Tibetan, which Mme. Blavatsky's Mahatmas showed her in trances. She described it thus: "An archaic manuscript-collection of palm leaves made impermeable to water, fire, and air, by some specific and unknown process —is before the writer's eye."

Her principal literary monument, "The Secret Doctrine" (1888) consists mainly of excerpts from the "Book of Dzyan" interspersed with her own lengthy commentaries and anti-scientific diatribes. The "Book of Dzyan" begins:

1. The Eternal Parent, wrapped in her Ever-Invisible Robes, had slumbered again for Seven Eternities.
2. Time was not, for it lay asleep in the Infinite Bosom of Duration...

The first stanza, comprising seven such shlokas, bears a suspicious resemblance to the opening of the "Song of Creation" from the "Rig-Veda"—which, to be sure, is nothing against it.

The "Book of Dzyan" has been taken seriously by people other than Mme. Blavatsky's followers. Augustus Le Plongeon cited it as a "Sanskrit" authority. Le Plongeon was a sad-eyed French physician with a beard down to his navel, who in the later nineteenth century excavated Mayan ruins. By an erroneous "translation" of Mayan hieroglyphs, and occult symbolic interpretation of Mayan sculptures, he derived a fanciful story of the sinking of Atlantis, or Mu, and the founding of the Egyptian and Mayan civilizations by the survivors thereof.

Le Plongeon's theories were inherited and expanded by Paul Schliemann, the grandson of the archeologist Heinrich Schliemann. In 1912 the later Schliemann, tired of being a little man with a big name, announced sensational discoveries bearing on Atlantis. One of these was a Chaldean manuscript from Lhasa, Tibet, which, if not in the first rank of non-books, deserves honorable mention. None of Schliemann's "evidence" ever materialized.

After Schliemann, the story was further enlarged upon by James Churchward. Churchward, a small wraith-like Englishman in his seventies, called himself "Colonel," and claimed to have traveled in India, Tibet, and Central America, where he was attacked by a flying snake. There is internal evidence for doubting these claims.

In "The Lost Continent of Mu" (1926) and subsequent "Mu" books, he told how in India and/or Tibet (he was not consistent) he saw a host of clay tablets inscribed in an ancient language which only adepts like himself could read. These "Naacal tablets" made Mu and Atlantis two separate places, the former being in the Pacific. The tablets are, of course, pseudobiblia. Churchward's works are drivel of the first water, consisting of mis-statements, misquotations, non-existent references, symbolic interpretations, and other absurdities.

Churchward not only cited Schliemann's "Lhasa manuscript," but paid his respects to the "Book of Dzyan." While he swallowed it as genuine Sanskrit literature, he called it "nonsense" and "the writings of a disordered brain." Perhaps he was jealous.

Tibet, being so inaccessible, has for decades been a favorite site for such products of the imagination. There

(*Continued on page 25*)



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# Approaching the Unapproachable

*PHILOSOPHER'S QUEST. By Irwin Edman. New York: The Viking Press.* 1947. 275 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by LEONARD BACON

EVERYONE who has ever listened to Mr. Edman knows that he is pleasant, modest, and eloquent. His mind is acute and he is adroit without recourse to sophistry. Few persons are better qualified to take hypotheses apart, and when he tentatively puts one together, you can almost hear him say: "I am not sure this will wash, but we might try." In short, his manner is thoroughly disarming and straightforward and he is quite guiltless of the sort of casuistry which is a not infrequent companion of fanaticism.

Philosophy is not an impostor word. Rather it is the most industrious of chameleons. Most people use it in many senses, each with nuances and shades that now suggest and now conceal, much in the manner of Gipsy Rose Lee. Professor Edman constantly and consistently makes it mean the science of ultimate reality and fundamental things. And I am sure he knows as well as the next man that no one has ever got there. What interests Professor Edman and what he makes interesting to anyone who will give him a little attention is the variety and ingenuity of certain attempts to approach the unapproachable. From the time of Aristophanes the denigration of such endeavors has afforded persons of leisure good sport on rainy days, but it may be answered that Man has got more than he lost from many apparent failures to solve the insoluble. The invention of a dialectic, like its subsequent rejection, produces by-products. And it is not improbable that many a contemporary physicist is more critical than he would have been if Socrates had never got after Protagoras. Although many philosophies seem to the bystander to consist mainly of intuitions supported by imposing arguments whose vice is a tendency to fall to the ground, occasionally there is something in the intuitions and now and then in the arguments. What remains is at present being studied with interest by a school of persons who are at once skeptical and enthusiastic and who are fully aware that no one can see the lens of his own eye, an organ whose invisible curvature is apt to diminish or exaggerate the importance of such phenomena as may appear.

—*Garrett.*

**Irwin Edman "is quite guiltless of the sort of casuistry which is a not infrequent companion of fanaticism."**

I believe Professor Edman is a member of that school. If I understand him, his Absolute is provisional and his assumptions subject to change without notice. As was said long ago by a great scientist, an hypothesis is not a faith but a policy, which is to be judged not by its elegance but by its fertility. Fixedness and unchangeability of doctrine grow meaningless in an Heraclitean universe where everything is flowing. We may form preliminary notions of what is likely to appear around the next bend in the stream of time and circumstance. But don't deliver an ultimatum to the unpredictable. If things seem to fit into our categories, it will be sensible to go easy. The generalization so far watertight can easily spring a leak among the rocks and rapids of the Unknown. And the nasty thing about the Unknown is its ghastly and uncalled-for ubiquity. If this impressionistic account does Professor Edman wrong, let him set it down to ignorance.

To take up some details, the reviewer found the chapter on "The Private Thinker and the Public World" not only reasonable but exciting. And its conclusion that wisdom isn't wisdom unless it worms its way into the consciousness of the common man, where it travels under the alias of "horse sense," is remarkably satisfactory. The section called "The Undistracted," in which he considers the views of five great thinkers who looked on "the ultimate realities" from different angles but with the same intensity, is illuminating and informing. The reviewer felt that "The Philosophic Neurosis," in which a burning interest in this department of thought is described from the standpoint of the psychoanalyst, however diverting, was perhaps too elaborate. He would prefer the same charge against "The Great Purgation," a fantasy about a Federal law which prohibited the teaching or discussion of philosophy. On the other hand, "America's Own Philosopher" is a brilliant satirical flight. The pitiless exploitation of a fine old Midwestern professor of philosophy by the press, by the social world, by the Rotary Clubs, is hit off to the nines and without mercy. The parable is not only true but tragic in its implications.

The reviewer is not much accustomed to penetrating such penetratalia. He would not read the "The Critique of Pure Reason," unless his life depended on it. Plato, except for "the dramatic part," which Gibbon extolled at the expense of the Greek's theory, leaves him a little cold. But Professor Edman is a pleasant companion in a labyrinth where one can easily get lost and which is alarming on that account alone, even if, as some believe, there is little danger of encountering the Minotaur.

*Leonard Bacon has devoted himself solely to writing since* 1923, *when he resigned as English professor at the University of California. He won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in* 1941.

# *Split Silence*

By Richard Gillman

THE broken road is wet with rain puddles
Looking up like orphans at the sky
(That's only a big, dark, deep hole
Of constant nothingness.)
If some sucking moth were sucking
It would be heard as loud
As brittle glass breaking in an empty house.
It is that silent.
But Time passes Silence by,
And comes the racing automobile
Over the broken road
And over the orphan puddles.



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# Navy Inexplicables Explained

*OPERATIONS IN NORTH AFRICAN WATERS. By Samuel Eliot Morison. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1947. 285 pp. $5.*

Reviewed by HARRY C. BUTCHER

HISTORIANS will be writing of World War II for years to come, but one series which should stand out is that of former Captain Samuel Eliot Morison, USNR. There are to be thirteen volumes in the series and the one under review actually is Number Two but is the first to come off the press. In the foreword, the Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, states that Captain Morison, who in civil life is the Jonathan Trumbull Professor of American History in Harvard University, suggested to President Roosevelt in 1942 the usefulness of a "full, accurate, and early record of the activities of the Navy in World War II." Morison was commissioned in the Naval Reserve, and those in charge of Naval activities were directed to make available to him any records he might care to scrutinize. To give realism to dry and sometimes stodgy official reports, the officer-historian took part in several amphibious operations and surface engagements. Captain Morison ultimately had access to records of interrogation of German and Italian commanders after the war.

To anyone who was in the North African campaign and who is curious about many of the then seemingly inexplicable things that happened, this history will be of absorbing interest. I had access to information at the top level of the Allied Command under General of the Army Eisenhower, yet I still found myself reading every word of the book, because it supplied details of combat operations, particularly of the landings at Casablanca, Oran, and Algiers, which were difficult to know at a high-level headquarters, or, if known, the stories were crowded out of one's mind by succeeding events during the campaign.

Captain Morison, with the aid of a small staff, has unfolded the details of each plan and the sub-plans for these amphibious operations with clarity and with a refreshing detachment of viewpoint. His story is well footnoted with references to the reports of Army as well as Naval observers and participants in these operations. The maneuvers are excellently illustrated with maps and photographs. The insert after page 42 showing the deceptive course of the huge armada which sailed from American ports might, however, have shown the position of U-boats. There were perhaps a hundred U-boats in the Atlantic at the time of Admiral Hewitt's unprecedented crossing, as were shown on war maps at headquarters. Every time one looked at the ghastly number of U-boats and studied the courses of convoys, the danger to men and material gave reason for thrills and prayers.

*—U. S. Signal Corps.*

**When the "Darlan Deal" was in the making: Admiral Darlan, Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, R. N., General Eisenhower, Captain Butcher, General Giraud (back turned).**

Captain Morison quite properly speaks many a kind word for the Navy, but he is frank in recording mistakes of both Navy and Army. This was part of the largest amphibious operation ever undertaken by any of the Allies or by any country up to that time. The Navy lads and many of the Reservist officers were new, and there had been little time for them to train. The same was true of the Army and Air units of both land and sea forces. But lessons were learned quickly, and each succeeding amphibious operation profited by the experience of preceding ones. Not so much is said about the strategic and tactical Air Forces in Africa, but as this is primarily a Naval history, I suspect that Captain Morison has decided that the Air people can speak for themselves. They generally do.

For those who booed or cheered the "Darlan Deal," Captain Morison has set down the best consecutive account of the reasons for General Eisenhower's recognition of Darlan I have read. An additional fact in the muddled French situation at that time, and not recognized until later, was the effect of German and Vichy propaganda on the French in North Africa. Short-wave broadcasts by President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and other Allied leaders were largely unheard and consequently unheeded in North Africa, principally because of jamming and partly because the French there had already been lulled into complacency about the war by the propaganda which they could most easily hear or read. Many Frenchmen were content, too, to let the war be fought elsewhere. It was a difficult field in which the liberty-loving French inside Africa had to work. The fact that useful assistance was rendered by them to the "friendly" invaders is a tribute to their patriotic zeal and willingness to take risks. Lessons learned in dealing with French resistance groups in North Africa were likewise of inestimable help in dealing with similar groups in France before and after D-Day 1944. The result was that the Allies received assistance of untold value from daring French men and women operating inside of France. These considerations perhaps are outside the scope of a history of Naval activities, but as many Naval officers were engaged directly or indirectly in this work, perhaps Captain Morison could write a few chapters on this aspect of the war in one of the subsequent volumes.

Morison's account of the ill-fated effort of the *Hartland* and the *Walney* of the Royal Navy to crash the harbor at Oran, with resultant heavy losses, is the best I have seen of this daring attack. He makes clear, however, that the plan for this phase of the assault on Oran, intended to save precious harbor facilities from sabotage by the French, was unsuccessfully opposed by Rear Admiral A. C. Bennett, USN, who was supported by Admiral H. R. Stark. Much depended on the workability of the port so that it would permit a steady flow of men and supplies for advance of the troops,



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particularly to support the race for Tunisia. It was one of those operations which, if successful, would have gone practically unnoticed as a routine affair, but when the gamble failed, it was, as the British say, a bad "do." The book gives some attention to the Royal Navy, but, as with the Air Force, Captain Morison has left to other historians the details of the excellent work of His Majesty's ships.

Overall the book is an excellent account of affairs in North Africa in the critical days when the Allies successfully shifted from defensive to offensive, and the complete series should justify the desire of the late President Roosevelt for a full and early account of the Navy's failures and successes.

# The Courage of Her Conviction

*THE MAKING OF A SOUTHERNER. By Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1947. 239 pp. $3.*

Reviewed by PAUL FLOWERS

THERE are people who will argue that the title of Miss Lumpkin's book is awry; that it should have been "The Unmaking of a Southerner." For to the professional Southerner, Miss Lumpkin's chronicle is the confession of a traitor to her class. Fortunately, most of those who adhere to that view, Ku Klux Klan adherents and followers of the newer Columbian cult, will not read this kind of literature, for they and their fellow travelers are proud of closed minds, and are mortally afraid, or profess to be, of experiences such as came to this author.

On the other hand, there is an ever-expanding circle of Southern people, as yet less articulate than Miss Lumpkin, Miss Lillian Smith, and Hodding Carter; people who have examined the traditional beliefs and customs of the South, and are convinced that the old way of life constitutes a flat denial of the ideals of democracy. They dare to admit that the traditional mores of the South were developed to maintain an economic system in which the cards were forever stacked against a minority. They recognize that the cult of white supremacy is a ragged curtain behind which it is no longer possible to hide, and that ultimately there must come a day of reckoning when all men shall be judged on the basis of human merit instead of on pigmentation.

"The Making of a Southerner" is the autobiographical story of a woman whose ancestral roots go deep into Georgia Baptist soil, roots nourished on the doctrine of white superiority and supremacy, on the dogma that an Almighty God decreed that the black race must always be hewers of wood and drawers of water. Miss Lumpkin came to young womanhood in such an environment, in Georgia and South Carolina; like most of her contemporaries she accepted that doctrine without question. Then she became exposed to alien ideas, and the alien ideas took. She was not satisfied with the rationalized explanations with which Southern clergymen and laymen had defended their position since before the Civil War. Miss Lumpkin demonstrated rare courage in defiance of her environment by examining these matters under the glass of reason, and then defying reproof and censure from her fellow Southerners by embracing a creed strange to them. She went all the way; she pulled no punches.

*—Eric Stahlberg.*

**Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin defied "reproof and censure from her fellow Southerners by embracing a creed strange to them."**

After her childhood in Georgia, Miss Lumpkin lived a few years in South Carolina, and discovered that there is a difference between white plantation people and the white "peckerwoods" of the hills. She also became aware that Negroes of the cotton lowlands were not like black people in the hills. Somehow, though, she never forgot that they were all human beings. Then came her full awakening at Columbia University and at the University of Wisconsin, when she discovered that pigmentation is basically unimportant except as it intensifies fears and passions. She learned, by trial, that she was not contaminated by association with Negroes; she found that she remained undefiled even when she ate at the same table with them. These discoveries were intensified when she traveled, through the South, with a Negro YWCA worker; but it was during that tour that she became painfully aware that her Negro companion's dollar would not buy in goods and services what her own money would command. On this she based her bitterest invective against a system which denies creature comforts—food and shelter and sanitation—to those degraded by a color caste system. It is against such discrimination that Miss Lumpkin cries out.

Most of this has been told many times, but this is the first instance wherein a Southern woman, reared in the revered tradition, has had the courage to break away from it with objective argument. This book may be a landmark in social literature, for here she has weighed the issue and found the system wanting. She breaks no lances with the demagogues, and she refrains from preaching. She presents facts, and lets the facts speak for themselves.

Miss Lumpkin and others might be surprised to learn that there are many today in the South who share her views, many who are ready for the change. Some day, no doubt, they will stand up to be counted. "The Making of a Southerner" could well be the rallying point for these Southerners who have become convinced that old attitudes on the race question need to be drastically revised.

*Paul Flowers, political science teacher at Memphis State College, is book editor and columnist for the local* Commercial Appeal. *He previously held a journalism professorship at West Virginia University.*

## FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 197

*A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 197 will be found in the next issue.*

CFH PNXXFA BKDD AKLR

EKASFHA KXGHTKXW

RARTXKAC. S. O. ASFTRNH

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*Answer to Literary Crypt No. 196*

His sayings are generally like women's letters; all the pith is in the postscript. Said about Charles Lamb.

WILLIAM HAZLITT.



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# Dr. Smith's Capsule Library

*COLUMBIA DICTIONARY OF MODERN EUROPEAN LITERATURE. Edited by Horatio Smith. New York: Columbia University Press. 1947. 899 pp. $10.*

Reviewed by ROBERT PICK

ON MOST of us encyclopedias and dictionaries have a fascinating effect. We cannot help wistfully enjoying the atmosphere of omniscience that emanates from their pages; and in putting another such tome onto our shelves we feel better protected than before against omission and error. The late Mr. Horatio Smith, general editor of this volume, in his preface gives a good account of the problems which he and his two hundred and thirty-nine contributors faced in "providing a record and signed evaluations of the chief books of the important literary artists of all continental Europe in the twentieth century and the immediately preceding and closely related decades." Infallibility of judgment for his group enterprise he does not claim; he knows that "what is offered here may some day appear as a quaint record of contemporary taste."

One of the most welcome features of the volume is the inclusion of longer articles on the various national literatures, presenting in each case a survey of the country's modern letters against the background of its history and its general culture. These essays indicate, moreover—by implication—the standards which have regulated the selections agreed upon within each "national" group. A single yardstick to be applied equally to all thirty-nine different literatures is hardly feasible. "Issues of nationalism kept emerging," Dr. Smith reports, "especially with some less conspicuous and by the same token more assertive countries." On the other hand, it is not the size of a country, or the number of people reached by its language that determines the importance of its writing, or the influence that writing has exerted on the whole of the Continental world. Take, for instance, the enormous influence of modern Scandinavian letters on Occidental literature. The development of fiction around the turn of the century is as unthinkable without Jens Peter Jacobson and Herman Bang as is that of the drama without Strindberg and Ibsen; Georg Brandes may be said to have established for Europe, outside of France, the political role of the critic; and Martin A. Nexö is among the few exemplary masters of the proletarian novel.

Yet it is not fair to measure the importance of any specific literature primarily by its impact on other literatures. Applied to, say, post-Mazzini Italy, such a method might, in spite of Carducci and Croce reduce the roster of her "important" authors to the sociologist Pareto, the playwright Pirandello, d'Annunzio, and Marinetti—and thus almost identify importance with cosmopolitan reputation. Fortunately, among the hundred Italian men and women commented upon here there are, besides these celebrities, many highly competent artists—most of them, outside of Italy, known to specialists only. To furnish such well-balanced information on them all as this dictionary does is, perhaps, its main function.

Most writing in every country remains of purely national interest, and draws its very force from its national limitations. Some of the very best—take that of the French-Swiss C. F. Ramuz—is regional. It must also be remembered that some Continental literatures owe their modern existence, or rather rebirth, to the nineteenth century only, and lack the benefit of a continuous tradition. Yet out of the writing of smaller, or less powerful, nations such masterpieces as Reymont's "Peasants" or J. Hasek's "Good Soldier Schweik" have found their way into world literature—and others may still be buried in some province. Literary life among small nations is often much more lively than in great countries, the separation between urban and rural art much less rigid, and the connection of both with national life much closer—though there also exists, and particularly existed in every such country in the 1880's and 1890's, a good deal of imitative writing patterned on foreign models. On these and many related subjects there is ample enlightenment in Dr. Smith's dictionary. Frequently, too, one will be bewildered by the variety of achievements unfolded.

One may be amazed, for instance, by the number of poets in every land. Some of the most expressive and, by that token, most important writing in any language is, of course, poetry. Yet to most Europeans (as to most Americans), the Hungarian Endre Ady, or the Czechs Jaroslav Vrchlicky and Otokar Brezina, or the Greek Kostes Palamas, all of them talked about with reverence by cognoscenti, have remained mere names. It is good to have them all assembled here and discussed by specialists.

What gives to European letters an astonishing degree of unity, despite diversity of tongues, of pursuits, and of esthetic values, is the acceptance on the part of a larger or smaller group of congenial artists in every country of beliefs and theories common at one time or another to all of them. It was an excellent idea, therefore, to insert in this book a number of general articles dealing with such matters as "French Naturalism," "German naturalism," "French symbolism," or "surrealism." There is also

"You're repressing him . . . when last did he bite your husband?"



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a fine piece on "Psychoanalysis." Since Marx's life does not fall into the period, an article on him is missing; yet considering the immense impact of Marxism and Marxist dialectics on twentieth-century writing, such a discussion, to my mind, would not have been out of place here.

From the point of view of news, the essay on Russian literature is easily the most striking—mainly because the books that have reached us from the Soviets have failed to create for us a reliable picture of the general state of letters there. Readers of Mikhael Shokolov's or Leonid Leonov's novels need not be told that the admirable continuity of Russian belles lettres has managed to survive all political earthquakes. Socio-religious speculations and radicalism dominated Russian literature long before the advent of the new regime. But so at times did nihilism, which is now absent. It remains to be seen whether the traditional earnestness of Russian writing will again raise it to that level of universal meaning attained in the work of the great nineteenth-century masters.

Russia and France have for long formed the great poles of modern Continental literature — largely because of their continuity. In France it was probably the age-old sense of artistic values that safeguarded that continuity despite her many political vicissitudes. On the very heels of the nineteenth-century giants came Proust and Valéry, Claudel and Gide; and they in turn, as Professor Henry Peyre writes with pride, were followed by "one of the most brilliant galaxies of talents France has ever known: Carco, Duhamel, Giraudoux, Jouhandeau, Jouve, Larbaud, Maritain, Roger Martin du Guard, Mauriac, Reverdy, Rivière, Romains, Suarès, Supervielle, Vildrac." And in the very midst of the late war new men, new literary forms, have made their appearance!

The principles which seem to have governed the selection of German writers cannot fail to puzzle the reader. Having found—in their proper places—articles on such philosophers, historians, and educators as Solovyov and Berdyayev, Unamuno and Ortega y Gasset, Renan, Bergson, Boutrous, Sorel, and Maritain, Croce, Pareto, Gentile, and De Sanctis, he will look in vain for similar information on Wundt, Windelband, Husserl, Heideger, Jaspers, Hermann Cohen, or Cassierer. There is no article on Troeltsch, Jakob Burckhardt, Max Weber, Oncken; nor on Dilthey, Scheler, Mommsen, Simmel; and none on Friedrich Gundolf, the immensely influential literary historian!

Surely some of these men deserved

about as much space as the "creative" writers who have represented, alas, the literary production within Hitler's Reich. True, nowhere is the line between academic publications and belles lettres as strictly drawn as among Germans; nevertheless, the virtual exclusion of learned books and their authors from this record constitutes, I submit, a regrettable departure from the method applied to the rest of the dictionary.

As experts, readers, too, have their predilections and dislikes; inevitably some of them will voice their specific protests and enter their particular claims. Some may discover an occasional minor error. Yet putting the handy and well-printed volume into a good place in my library, I feel safer than before—and I am sure that it is not the notorious magic of encyclopedias alone which makes me say so.

# "And Gladly Teach"

*DYNAMICS OF LEARNING. By Nathaniel Cantor. New York: Foster & Stewart.* 1946. *X* + 282 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by ORDWAY TEAD

"BUT he made his students think and he opened windows and he pointed to the horizon beyond." These are the final words of Houston Peterson's stirring anthology "Great Teachers" published last summer. They fittingly characterize the good teacher; and they felicitously describe Professor Cantor. Let no one gain the impression from the title that this is merely one more book on pedagogical method for students in teachers' colleges. Such students will, I trust, and in large number, profit from careful conning of this book; but so, too, will all others who have to meet with and guide groups, infant or adult, and who want to put the ways of learning under the microscope and see what germ it is that multiplies that yeast which is learning and the desire for learning.

The most unique feature of this study is its use of transcripts of class discussion so that one is drawing upon vivid case material. These recordings cover class activities at the beginning of the author's courses and along through them until the students write a final appraisal of what they have gained at the hands of this gifted teacher. These excerpts of class colloquy the author uses cleverly to show how the flow of thought and feeling went on through the recitation hour. The story has a human quality of suspense, bafflement groping for security and satisfaction of curiosity, which excites the reader while it points the moral of the puissance of Professor Cantor's Socratic method. And it does this with no undue pressing of the author's claims for personal superiority. Rather the book reflects the confidence — also Socratic—of one who knows whereof he speaks and who by his fructifying results has earned the right to speak well of what he has done. If this be immodesty, let us have more of it.

This book falls into no conventional category. But its intent is to show how through guided discussional techniques, the student may be driven back and back into an active, critical, and reconstructive experience through which he adds a cubit to his mental stature—not just verbally, but in terms of what is meaningful, relevant, and vital to him.

Professor Cantor may frighten some by blazoning on the jacket of his book "A Radical Departure from Tradition." But Professor Houston Peterson will tell him—indeed has told him in effect—that there are perennial imponderables in good teaching. But the passionate will to teach and the disposition gladly to teach, which Professor Cantor preeminently has, all this is only as radical as Socrates is. The present author is in the great tradition. It is to be hoped that many teachers will be moved by this book to scrutinize their classroom performance and become supercharged with the dynamics of learning.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 678)

HUGH McDIARMID:
*PARLEY OF BEASTS*

Auld Noah was at hame wi' them a',
The lion and the lamb,
Pair by pair they entered the Ark,
And he took them as they cam'.

. . . . . .

It's fain I'd mell wi' tiger and tit,
Wi' elephant and eel,
But noo-a-days e'en wi' ain's sel
At hame it's hard to feel.



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# Man's Inhumanity to Nature

*THIS IS THE YEAR. By Feike Feikema. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc.* 1947. 614 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

IT is only too easy to invent phrases cut to the measure of a long, relentless farm novel. You can say that it is about man fighting a losing battle against the forces of nature, that it reveals the grim tenacity with which the farmer hopes every spring for a good year, that here are the very odors of human sweat and the farmyard, and the pain of watching back-breaking and unremitting labor turn passionate youth into sapless and worn old age. But none of these conventional reactions can give the full flavor of Mr. Feikema's third novel.

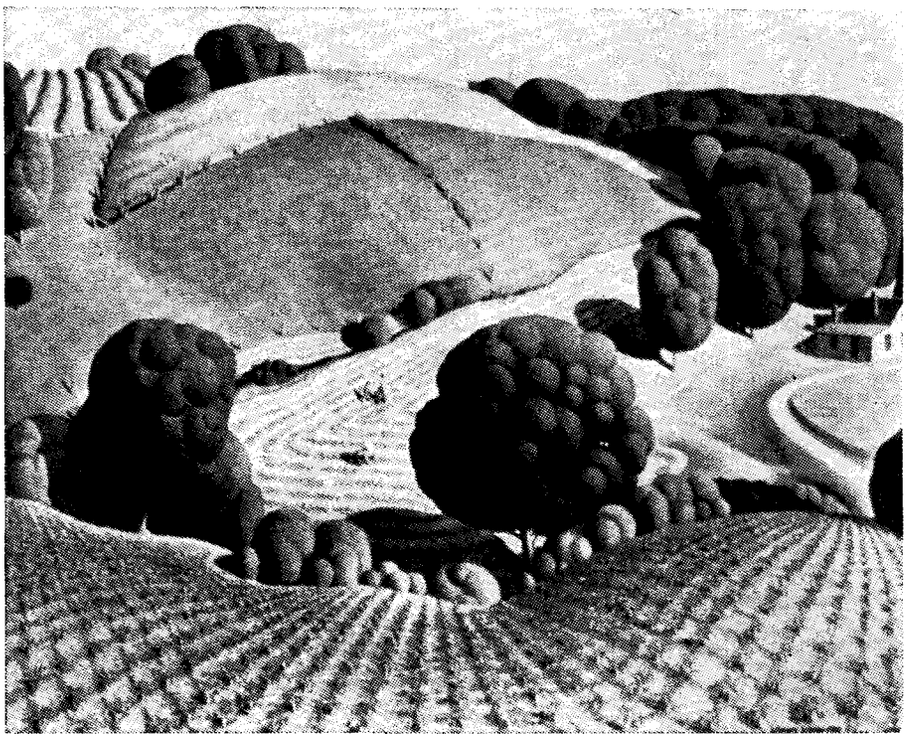
"This Is the Year" has the vitality of an epic narrative. It is not an invention or the work of a writer who has fled in his youth from the farm to the city and who looks back with loathing at the time when he had to get up at five in the morning to milk the cows with frozen fingers, whose back was almost broken every year plowing his father's fields, and who in the summer almost drowned in his own sweat as he followed the reaper. Mr. Feikema is a novelist, but it would be difficult to fit him into the picture of the ordinary literary man. He is only a few inches short of seven feet tall; and since he is in his early thirties, he could probably still bend a horseshoe with his hands or toss a sturdy bull around the pasture. He comes from the heart of Iowa, and he has seen a rugged people defeated and beaten by winter storms and summer floods or droughts. He is of Frisian ancestry, one of the husky human breeds from Northern Europe who settled in the Middlewest to wrest a living from the American earth. The tough farm people in the novel are of the same stock, so that his characters are the flesh-and-blood creations of his memory.

The devils that pursue Pier Frixen are two, the weather and the soil. When his ancestors first sank their plowshares into the acres that he finally received, or rather took away from his own father, they did not know that there were signs they could not read which should have sent them somewhere else. It was not land which could support many men no matter how hard they toiled. There was not enough water in dry times and the fertile top soil was too thin and too easily exhausted. Pier had the stubborn hostility of his peasant forebears to anything new, or to any order or advice from government agents or agricultural scientists. Like his father he furrowed his land vertically down the slopes, refusing the simple device of contour plowing, so that when the rains came the top soil year by year was drained into the streams and the river. He was as thick-headed as a bull.

As the novel begins, he takes a fair-haired, sturdy girl to wife. In ten years she is worn out, quarrelsome, and vapid. He had treated her, though he loved her, in the relentless fashion with which he plowed the ground. Tender and knowing with animals he wore her out and exhausted her strength with unremitting work. He made love brutally, like an animal, giving her no pleasure, so that the unfortunate woman became a neurotic wreck. His only son turned from the farm to an interest in machinery. When he became adult, he ran away as has many another farmer's boy, because he could no longer endure his father's rages, the bitterness that lay between his parents, and the futility of the struggle to preserve a farm which became less and less worth owning. When his wife dies in childbirth, he finds another woman. For the virtuous wife he substitutes a harlot and kicks her out of his house one day when he discovers that she has deceived him into marriage by pretending to be pregnant. Then, womanless and sonless, he tries to keep his ruined and now almost sterile farm from the mortgage shark who takes over one by one the neighboring places. In the end, old, bent, and white-haired at forty-five, he walks out into the world almost penniless.

It would be hard to follow so dismal a story through over 600 pages if there was no relief, for the pattern it follows is familiar. There have been scores of farm novels written before or during the depression in which nature kicks a struggling man to death and the small-town banker takes over what is left. It is the reality of the men and women the author has created, the simple earthy language in which the book is written that gives this book its vitality and its fascination. In his moments of exuberance and affection when he is aware that he strides the earth like a man meant to toil and love Pier is a figure to be remembered. And nature is not always devilish in its moods. There are times when the soft spring air and the mild sun sprinkle the prairie with sweet flowers or when the lusty corn springing up tall and tasseled in interminable rows seems as beautiful as anything in the world.

The moral of the story is that the soil no longer can belong to men, as women cannot long belong to them, who do not know how to care for them. If the land is brutally attacked and a living wrenched from it by main force, year after year, it will end by destroying its ravisher after making of him an impotent and broken frame of bones and sinews. Pier's farm lay in the dust bowl and for two seasons he saw the apocryphal scent of the fertile earth into the air from which



"Young Corn," by Grant Wood.



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it descended as harmful dust. Even that horrifying object lesson could not teach him or his clumsy, peasant neighbors a lesson. They went on draining the land, plowing straight down the hills and watching torrential rains turn brooks into ravaging floods. Incapable of learning anything new, unable even to read a newspaper or write a letter, scorning advice, Pier stumbled to his doom, with the town dwellers giving him a final kick behind. Pier's ancestors would have moved on West to devastate another hundred acres. In 1938 when the novel ends there was no more West to conquer, for the thick-witted destroyers had long before plowed their way to the Pacific Ocean. Mr. Feikema has written, not the final novel of man's inhumanity to nature, but one that should suffice for years to come.

# Sybarite Extraordinaire

*NEW LIFE OF MR. MARTIN. By Robert Briffault. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.* 1947. 436 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

ANTHONY WHITFORD, whose life under the name of Mr. Martin is the subject of Mr. Briffault's narrative, is billed by the latter's publishers as "a sort of modern Count of Monte Cristo." He is all that, and a good deal more. Indeed, he is perhaps the most fabulous fellow to be found in the long annals of fiction.

Having been erroneously pronounced dead by a coroner's jury, and having inherited a fortune made by a brother in America, Mr. Martin emerges from the depths of Limehouse to make use of his legacy. Its exact amount is never given, but, if one is to judge by what he manages to do with it, I should estimate it at a billion pounds or so. Among other things, it provides him with a collection of astonishing residences in various parts of the world, including an Arabian Nights castle in the heart of the Atlas Mountains, enables him to manipulate the stock markets of New York and London, puts a fleet of airplanes at his disposal, wherever he may be, and permits him to engage secretly in a private war against fascism both at home and abroad.

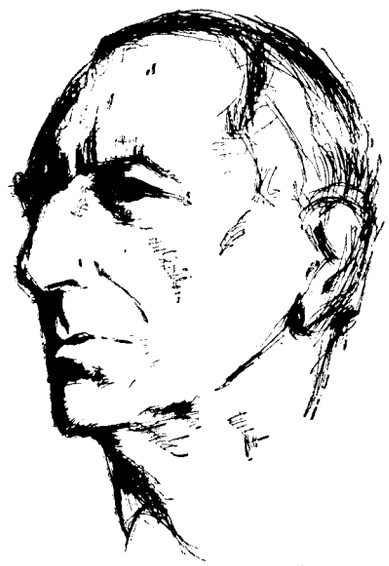
For, you see, Mr. Martin is no mere playboy. When he is indulging himself under the name of Sid Harun in the wilds of North Africa, he may enjoy a luxury and a license no oriental potentate ever matched; his county seat, Shurlock Hall, may be characterized by a magnificence and a mystery that are both un-English; but he is also a mighty worker on the side of virtue. This is the brisk and comparatively simple fashion in which he begins one of his working days in his London house. He is, by the way, happily planning to outwit some very wicked financiers:

> Spurred by joyful anticipation, Mr. Martin sprang out of bed. The bathroom was adorned with a frieze of Maenads. Two skilled attendants laved and shampooed him in baths of diverse temperatures, douched, rubbed, massaged and perfumed him. Passing into another room, Mr. Martin placed himself in the hands of his barber, his manicurist, pedicure and dentist. His valets helped him to dress. Their expert sense of clothes could generally be trusted. But sometimes, as on the present occasion, Mr. Martin selected a less formal attire than they suggested and a subtler color scheme.

Our hero fights fascism with ardor and ingenuity, but in the process he manages to collect women as well as residences, and generally shares with them his remarkable powers of enjoyment. He is a man to whom nothing, save one prize, is denied. But do not think that he is incapable of restraining himself on occasion. When, for example, he believes himself about to possess the woman he loves above all others, this is his conduct:

> He sprang up in buoyant elation. Oh! rare! She had answered perfectly, intelligently. He dropped to her side. Softly he drew her into his arms. Softly, flustered, fluttering, she abandoned herself to his lingering kiss. But he kept a snaffle on passion. The fruity seal of her lips was incommensurate with its pledge that should before long deliver every feast to his unchecked luxury. He was not for trenching upon the dizziness of that impending moment.

Amid his other activities, which include periodical descents into the Limehouse depths, Mr. Martin finds time to think thoughts that are long and deep, and to express them with a tireless eloquence that is fed by Mr. Briffault's own wide-ranging and curious lore. He is most eloquent, perhaps, when he speaks of his hates: the English upper classes, England's foreign policy, and Christianity. ("How thou art loved, England, by the fascist gangsters and Nazi fanatics raised to ephemeral power by thy grace! . . . England, the real world danger. Far, far beyond any fascism strutting to the abyss. . . . Christendom, on the contrary, began with the destruction of ancient European civilization and the deepening night of the Dark Ages, out of which Islam rescued Europe when it lay under the shadow of the Cross. With the decay of religion, European culture rose again. Yet that deadly power, shadow that it is of what it formerly was, still paralyzes the European world, which once called itself Christendom.") However, when he looks towards the east, presumably towards Russia, Mr. Martin feels upsurgings of hope.



—*Etching by Theodore Brenson.*

**Robert Briffault: "He who comes into print voluntarily places his head in the pillory for every lout to pelt at."**

Enough has been quoted, perhaps, to show that Mr. Briffault is capable of remarkably fancy writing, but he must be read fully to be fully appreciated. As for attempting to criticize his fantastic yarn, that would plainly be a foolhardy business. For has he not, through Mr. Martin's mouth, had his say regarding critics?

> He who comes into print voluntarily places his head in the pillory for every lout to pelt at. . . . Every office boy is licensed to spit upon him in public. Miserable hack-scriveners, to flaunt their superior parts, are paid to fling ordure at him. The high pundits of taste, in stature qualified, maybe, to loosen the victim's shoe-strings, are usually foremost to evacuate filth on his devoted head.

What bolder critics will have to say of "New Life of Mr. Martin," I dare not guess. But surely they cannot say that it is boring, and they must admit, unless they are monsters of unfairness, that the author of "The Mothers," "Europa," and "Europa in Limbo," is, at seventy, still going strong. Perhaps stronger than ever.

*Ben Ray Redman, author, editor, motion picture executive, poet, translator, and free-lance writer, is currently in Santa Monica, Calif., with his wife, actress Frieda Inescort. He has contributed introductions to, edited, and is represented in numerous anthologies.*



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## 1250 BOOKS

IN 1923 the American Institute of Graphic Arts, then in its tenth year, put on its first exhibition of Fifty Books of the Year. The purpose of the exhibition was, as it still is, "to honor the work of those designers, manufacturers, and publishers who in the opinion of the jury have solved most successfully their artistic and technical problems, and to demonstrate to the public through exhibitions what are the principles of good book-making."

This year the AIGA is conducting its twenty-fifth exhibition, and displaying its 1201st to 1250th choices. In New York the books are being shown at the Grolier Club, 47 East 60th Street, through April 13. They will then go on tour, and will be on display in some twenty cities, coast to coast, during the year.

To the AIGA must go at least some small share of the credit (perhaps a very large share, since influences are a little beyond the reach of public opinion polls, and difficult to assess) for the fact that the past quarter-century has seen the production of a greater proportion, and a greater absolute quantity, of physically admirable books than any other comparable period in the history of printing. The well-apparelled, well-fashioned book has come out of the locked and humidified treasure room onto the living-room table and the classroom desk. This year, for instance, the AIGA choices include "The Discovery of Florida, Being a True Relation of the Vicissitudes that Attended the Governor Don Hernando de Soto," printed by Edwin and Robert Grabhorn for, of all clients, the Book Club of California (the accent must be strongly on "Vicissitudes"), and selling for $27.50, but alongside it is M. Wiles Keller's "College Algebra," issued by Houghton Mifflin Company at $3. Here, too, is "The Dance of Death Printed at Paris in 1490: A Reproduction Made from the Copy in the Lessing G. Rosenwald Collection," printed by the Government Printing Office for the Library of Congress, price $20, rubbing shoulders with "Third Avenue, New York," by John McNulty, with illustrations by Beatrice Tobias, put out by Little, Brown and Company at $2. "The Discovery of Florida" is the most expensive item on the new Fifty Books list (though it is far from being the most expensive book published during 1946); there are several titles at $20, $15, $10, but there are also five at $3, eight at $2, and five at figures below $2, including one at $1.10.

Well-designed books now reach the masses as well as the classes. Fiction, school texts, "portables," how-to classifications have in latter years become more and more common on Fifty Books rosters. Early selections were almost exclusively confined, not by any intent on the part of the juries, to books about printing, art catalogues, bibliographies, and frank show-pieces—the expense-be-damned sort of thing.

The trade book has had its face washed and its hair combed and can now hold its own with the tenderly nurtured children of Limited Editions Avenue and Private Press Boulevard. One has only to look at the trade book of the early years of the twentieth century, or, for even speedier conviction, at most of the productions of the nineteenth, to appreciate at a glance the enormous progress that has been made. The original edition of "Moby Dick" was perhaps the ugliest single volume ever fashioned, but it were well not to be superlative and exclusive in these matters, since the competition was severe; Emerson's "Essays," "Walden," "The Song of Hiawatha," and "Ben-Hur" were only a little less bad, though even that may be treating them too kindly. And British books of the period were no lovelier.

Perhaps the most encouraging aspect of zealous and intelligent adherence to "the principles of good book-making" is the progress that has been made in text-book design. In one sense the trip was easy, because there was nowhere to go but up. In appearance and accoutrement text-books, by and large, used to be the least appealing of printed objects; today they are frequently the most satisfying—and a lot easier to open.

Taste has improved generally, but that is probably not the principal factor in the growth in the number of well-designed books. Most important, perhaps, has been the increasing awareness of the fact that a book is a physical entity as well as a spiritual and intellectual one, an artifact no less than a vehicle for a text, something to look at as well as to look into. If publishers have found that a customer is more readily attracted to a well-designed book than to an ill-designed (or undesigned), so much the better. Craftsmanship, unfortunately, has not kept pace with the urge to better books; this year's AIGA jury was "impressed that so many imaginative books had been designed but discouraged, that so many good conceptions should have suffered from poor execution." The members of the jury plead for restoration of "the old-fashioned virtues of conscientiousness and sound craftsmanship." War-enforced hardships and makeshifts, many of which are not yet overcome, may have something to do with the occasional failure of realization to match anticipation.

But, on the whole, the picture is bright. Ground won is not likely to be lost. Time was when AIGA juries were hard put to it to make up their quotas of fifty; today their task is purely one of selection. May this condition of an abundance of riches long endure.

J. T. W.

## *One Red Rose*

By Mark Van Doren

MY LOVE she is a rose that lives
When nothing else does any longer.
Winter deepens and worlds die,
But one red rose meanwhile is stronger.

My love is that one, and I live
Because she does, in wind and rain
That are as warm as when we first
Were slips of summer to be slain.

Yet this my rose, outliving frost,
Is fresher now than any new one.
She alone, of all that smile,
Is red and loving, is the true one.



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Trade Surnames

SIR: In my article, "Make a Name for Yourself" [*SRL* Jan. 25] I wrote: "Can you name a trade that begins with a vowel?"

What I meant—and what I should have expressed more clearly—was a name like those I mentioned—Baker, Brewer, Butler, Carpenter, etc.—*which had become a common family name*. The many correspondents who have answered my challenge, led astray by my ambiguity, suggested many trade names which do not satisfy this condition. Such surnames as Undertaker, Anthologist, and Osteopath do, it is true, begin with vowels, but could hardly be used for fictional purposes as type names for the Man in the Street. Has any one ever heard of a Harry P. Insulator?

Only trade surnames originating in the Middle Ages, when the custom first became usual, are now found in directories and in the list of most people's acquaintance. They have long outlived their origin and now by no means connote mediocrity. The list of Smiths, from Sidney to Al, contains many celebrities. Still, since such names are so common (in the sense of frequency) they do, in fiction, suggest the Average Man.

The only name suggested which seems to fit the requirements of the author in this respect is Ostler. Some forty correspondents suggested the name of Joiner. There are two in the N. Y. Telephone Directory, and a few Joyners, but neither name, I consider, is frequent enough to satisfy fictional need.

One correspondent, however, did catch me napping. Bladen County, as well as the towns of Yadkin and Harnett are in North, not South Carolina.

And now, if my correspondents will forgive me, I hope they'll help me with that other, more interesting alphabet—the one of famous or fictional names in alphabetical sequence, beginning Adam Bede, Claude Duval, David Elginbrodd, etc. I think the *SRL* would be glad to print the best complete list, if anyone can discover a WX, XY, and YZ that are well known.

GELETT BURGESS.

New York, N. Y.

### Mr. Robinson's Psychomedy

SIR: One ought not, perhaps, object to entertainment of the type offered in Henry Morton Robinson's review of Philip Wylie's views on mores. The bubbling vapors of psychoanalysis that arise from the boiling crack-pots of psychiatry have comic values ranking with the gods coined periodically by Hollywood occultists.

However, when this type of psychomedy offers itself as serious criticism or explanation, it is likely to mislead the more naïve lovers of good dirty fun. It seems that Mr. Wylie might justifiably object to such gratuitous insolence as this: "The single clear fact about the essay (clear, that is, to anyone who has an ounce of psychoanalytic insight) is that its author is still raging . . . against unlaid ghosts of infantile hatred and undissolved aggression." Just what sense is there in that? What are *unlaid ghosts of infantile hatred*? I've heard of unlaid eggs and spinsters, but this is a new one. And since when did hatred reach an age, infantile or senile? The father of psychomedy wasn't Freud; it was Humpty Dumpty—and he knew a yolk when he cracked wisely. And what does one use to dissolve aggressions? Perhaps moonshine dissolved in psychacid?

Mr. Robinson waxes lyrical as well as meaningless in this: ". . . I can report that this book is not only a recognizable microcosm of our stricken world, but also a revealing psychograph—an artillery-map, so to speak, —of Mr. Wylie's embattled soul." I had a hell of a time with that. I could see artillery sticking up out of a map of . . . but where did I put that *soul* and its *psychograph*! I'm frustrated, I am. I can go along with a gag, but Mr. Wylie's *soul* must have got *dissolved* instead of his *aggressions*. In a psychemical couch, it is so easy to mix up the labels and appliances. Maybe Mr. Wylie's *momism* got her or its *psychograph* caught in a psychomic wringer!

LESLIE EVAN SCHLYTTER.

Chicago, Ill.

THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH

"There's only one solution—don't make buildings so tall."

### Feminine Keystones

SIR: I do not understand Dr. Farnham's implied criticism, in "The Pen and the Distaff," of the topics about which women choose to write [*SRL* Feb. 22]. Are not "interpersonal" and "love" relationships the keystones of most women's lives? And why is that to be deplored? As long as the family continues, however shakily, to be the unit at the base of our civilization surely women's preoccupation with the inward life of the individual is quite necessary. Also, one does get the impression in contemporary life that improved personal relationships would be a good thing.

It is impossible, of course, to condone the superficiality of the slicks' stories or the cheapness of novels written with dubious motives, but when one stops to consider how few women were writing a hundred years ago it is hard to be thoroughly discouraged in spite of the quality of their present output. Perhaps it's not that women are lost but that they've not yet found themselves.

ISABEL A. HOLDEN.

Bedford Village, N. Y.

SIR: In spite of her obvious lack of sympathy with our sex, Dr. Farnham has done a good service with her article. It should help men to a closer understanding of what women really want in this world.

As Dr. Farnham points out, women have a deep and abiding love for men. In my opinion, the greatest failure and the worst crime of the ruling male is his slowness to recognize this all-dominant trait in women and to reward and satisfy it by changing or reforming all his so-called moral restrictions on the personal liberties of women. In order that women may love freely and give birth to and bring up their children in safety and happiness, it will be necessary to discard more and more of the beliefs, customs, and laws now guarded by masculine monopolies.

ALMA BOOKER.

Pittsburgh, Pa.



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# Kansas Circa 1900

*THE WALLS OF JERICHO. By Paul I. Wellman. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co.* 1947. 423 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by WALTER HAVIGHURST

THE towns between the Mississippi River and the Rockies have a brief and crowded past. Many of them were products of a land boom; they grew from crossroads to municipality in a few hectic years. They were places of rawness and violence and a mingling of diverse people. It was a generation before their assorted citizens could become a society. Mr. Wellman's novel portrays a west Kansas town in the early years of the century. Though Jericho never became a metropolis it did grow from a cow town to a thriving county seat and market center. It became a strategic scene in Kansas politics, with Populism and the Farmers' Cooperative Association contesting the intrenched interests. It developed an influential newspaper and sent a man to Congress. The growth of the town, and the growth of a man along with it, is Mr. Wellman's subject. He works up an eventful, complicated, and sometimes manipulated plot to show the forces at work in the man and in the just-forming society.

When rangy, good-humored David Constable, aged twenty-five, came to the gangling town of Jericho to begin the practice of law, his first friend was Tucker Wedge, editor of the local newspaper. Dave early revealed his ambition, and also his idealism. He was interested in politics but not in the support of the calculating, reactionary banker Porter Grimes. He became a friend of the friendless, sardonic, disreputable lawyer Jefferson Norman, and the defender of brawny Gotch McCurdy who in self-defense killed an Irish section foreman in a drunken fight. There is much about David Constable that is credible and appealing. He has humor and loyalty and an unostentatious integrity. But in the early chapters of the novel he shows a recurrent resemblance to one of the Rover boys. When the pick-up Jericho baseball team plays Dodge City the young lawyer stars on the mound, and wins a new respect from the Jericho citizens. In the scene at the livery stable the big drunken McCurdy is kept from killing a man with a crowbar by the authority in the young lawyer's voice. Even the onlookers felt it—"With a suddenly enhanced respect, the men gave Dave room." How this same masterful man could fall victim to a vapid, petulant, overweight girl and her gross and ranting mother, we could hardly know—except for Dave's chivalry. He kissed the girl one moonlight night on the prairie and then, because of her mother's storming, he married her.

—*Geronimus.*

"Like many of our novels, Paul I. Wellman's doesn't quite seem mature."

Soon the mother came to live with them, and Dave was stuck with two of the most repellent women in or out of Kansas. With his chivalry, and his political ambition, it took him a long time to get free of them, and, meanwhile, a succession of other disillusioning events completed the undoing of his youthful chivalry and left him free to claim the love of Julia Norman and to take up his still-promising political career.

It seems to me an over-wrought novel, like the over-wrought architecture of that Kansas town. Generally the reader is ahead of the story, even though it is crowded with events and complications. Like many of our novels, it doesn't quite seem mature. They are already building its sets in Hollywood.

There is, however, a background in this novel. Jericho was a vigorous, jostling, windswept Kansas town. In the restless streets of Jericho the reader feels that a society was taking shape.

# Puerto Rican Portrait

*THE FIESTA AT ANDERSON'S HOUSE. By Scott Graham Williamson. New York: Henry Holt & Co.* 1947. 339 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

AMONG the ideas projected by Mr. Williamson's novel is this: that perhaps we have to have a creative writer, a novelist, or a poet, if we are to have also a full-visioned social report upon any part of our world. The proof is here. No ordinary documentary study of Puerto Rico could have succeeded in giving so colorful and sensitive an account of the life of the island, or so large and comprehensive a group of life-portraits: the worker, the beggar, the poet, the painter, the politician, the revolutionary, the cabaret girl, the soldier, the American journalist, the American imperialist—each of them shaded and dimensioned and stirring with life. This is the material of the novel, richly splashed with color.

The device Mr. Williamson has employed to draw his book together is necessary and negligible, a farewell party for a journalist who has done a piece of reportage on the island for a news weekly—just such a piece as this book is not. He is dissatisfied with the job he has done, because even as he was working and investigating his own point of view was changing. His own values were undergoing fundamental revision under pressure of the exotic, primitive, desperate life in that crowded and despoiled colony. He was developing new sympathies, learning to care about these people more than one should (he knew) for the literary material one uses. He leaves Anderson's house, on a last tour of San Juan, to extend invitations to the fiesta he is to give tomorrow, his day of departure. He goes to see his friend Rafael the painter, and Felipe and Escalante the musicians. He speaks to Moro the politician, Bierman the social worker. He pauses for several drinks at the Danubio Azul, and asks the girls there to come.

At the party next day all of San Juan seems to be represented, all of its many facets and kinds of people milling about in Anderson's house, talking, fighting, getting easier and looser with the quantities of liquor they drink, until the room is a maelstrom of emotion and struggle, argument and sex and political passion. Outside, a hurricane comes up to match the winds of emotion within. The party becomes suddenly heated; they are all fighting, loving, struggling indiscriminately in the darkened house. It is a wild saturnalia, broken up as by a preordained signal, at the death of Anderson and the crash of elemental violence outside the house.

And, to return to the point, here is the story of Puerto Rico, feral and passionate, frustrate and vengeful, depressed and irrepressible, that McCormick the journalist could not write. It is a brilliantly written book, a very complex job done with sparkling virtuosity.



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# *Cul-de-sac*

JAMES N. ROSENBERG

RECENT visits to the Whitney Museum and to the 57th Street galleries in New York City show that the tidal wave of abstractionism still inundates us. In the historic 1913 Armory show the "Nude Descending the Staircase" was a rebel's bombshell in the midst of the academic Fotografism of those long vanished, pre-World War I days. But the Sons and Daughters of the 1913 Revolution have become today's appalling Academicians. Yesterday's revolutionaries are today's reactionaries.

The Nude has for three and a half decades been descending the staircase. She is now not in an ivory tower, but deep, deep underground, in a remote cellar far from realities, conflicts, and the chaos of the world of today.

There were times in art when Daumier and Goya could cry out against the horror of war and injustice. But today's non-objective wielders of paint are either unaware of the terrifying world that surrounds us or are vainly trying, like many other ostriches, to run away from it.

If Cézanne were to come back to earth, we may believe, judging by the letters of that humble worshiper of nature, that he would be horrified because his references to cubes and spheres as a means of giving art dimension have become the be-all and the end-all of a large share of what is called modern art. It is not modern. It is dated. It has gone down a blind alley and ended in the *cul-de-sac* of the madhouse.

—*The Bettmann Archive.*

**Duchamp's "'Nude' has for three and a half decades been descending the staircase."**

The psychiatrist is needed. The painter requires shock treatment. His relation to two world wars needs diagnosis and treatment. Was he part or merely product of the Causa Causans? In the first dozen years of this chaotic century, in those happy, blind times when such a catastrophe as world war was unthinkable, the artist was perhaps prophet. Delving into the Freudian mysteries, he startled us into perception of the fact that there is more to art, as there is more to life, than what the optic nerve gives us. Cubism and the introspective abstractions of three decades ago were thus perhaps a kind of soul-searching rebellion against literalism and the impressionists an exploration into the unknown, an adventure of the subsconscious.

Today, the zest of that adventure, the thrill of those explorations are deader than the mummies of Egypt; and the tragedy of this contemporary decease is that the abstractionists do not know that they have passed away, are not aware that Euclid did not write the final magnum opus on art. They have had no decent burial; they are ghosts who walk the streets and occupy studios which ought to belong to the living. They paint; often with great facility and cleverness — their dead spheres and triangles, their cubic one-eyed or eyeless females, their hexagons and ellipses. Slaves of Euclidism, they are more to be pitied than censured.

Let them read the February *Harper's;* let them ponder over the story of the atom there told by Henry L. Stimson. Perhaps that will break loose from the chains of soul-schism and schizophrenia which now imprison them; possibly that will give them bones, flesh, a head, and a heart.

This is a protest. It should cause its author to be denounced as an aged, infirm, and blind reactionary. I hope so. The more vitriolic the attack, the better. It might show that old Doctor Abstract can abstract something from the concrete and thereby perhaps come back to life. I shall not object to objections from the non-objectivist. Let him slay me, not with words alone, but with colors creating concretism, and the world will be grateful. Concrete, he should note, is sometimes more durable than the abstract. Let him ascend the staircase. Many of us, I venture to believe, will grant him not only tolerance toward new expression but perhaps even the final encouragement of the check book.

—*Kootz Gallery.*

**Picasso's "Woman with Sheep's Skull"— "soul-searching rebellion against literalism" or "deader than the mummies of Egypt"?**

A few days ago I happened upon a volume published in Paris in 1913. It consists of photographs of 703 highly successful paintings, which had then made the grade by getting into the Luxembourg Museum, and being put into a book. Dull pictures, most of them, French, German, Austrian, American, English, Belgian, Spanish, Portugese, Dutch, Italian, Russian, Scandinavian, Swiss, and Turkish; an international assemblage chiefly of mediocrity.

It would be amusing (and amazing I fancy) to undertake an Information-Please game with today's critics, collectors, curators, dealers, and painters. I believe it would show that out of the top notchers of a half-century ago scarcely a handful are remembered. The fact is that fashions change in art, as in attire. That is a truth of which the 57th Street vendors of abstraction might profitably take notice. To the collector who pays a trifle of $20,000 for today's non-objective prized parallelogram *Verbum Sap;* also *Caveat Emptor.*

*James N. Rosenberg, retired lawyer and honorary Joint Distribution Committee chairman, has published several books and articles. He had a one-man show last month at the Wildenstein and is represented in sixteen museums, including the Metropolitan.*



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# Seeing Things

## OSCARIANA

AS is the way of things which seem to guarantee permanence, the Victrola record is no more. It has been thrown away or, worse still, broken. The fact that I cannot find it, and hear it now when I have just seen John Gielgud's revival of "The Importance of Being Earnest,"* depresses me mightily. Out of sheer self-indulgence I had promised myself to keep it always. I wanted to have it at hand so that I could play it in the future as often as I have played it in the past.

This Red Seal record, on which Mr. Gielgud as John Worthing states his qualifications for marriage to Edith Evans's Lady Bracknell, was for me (even as it must remain for many others lucky enough still to possess it) both the proof and the reminder of what high comedy at its best can be.

If ever perfection has been caught upon a disc, it is so captured on this record. All the evanescent glories of conversation are by it made enduring. It achieves that altitude of indifference which is the final artifice of artificial comedy. For once the rainbow in the soap-bubble of inspired badinage is preserved as if it were a diamond set in platinum.

Speech of a special stylized sort can be summoned on it at will, with that style, seemingly so easy but in truth so difficult, completely realized. It is speech as languorous as dialogue can—and must—be only when, by intention, it is disconnected from the emotions and speaks for the ridiculous. For laughter's sake all the expected questions and answers that are normal in everyday life are turned topsy-turvy. Courtship is parodied, love robbed of ardor, society spoofed, property made absurd, and aristocracy lampooned to a jester's taste. The record is devoted to the give-and-take of two minds whose only serious business is nonsense. That the duellists seem to yawn as they cross swords is only part of their strategy and the confession of their pretense.

The drama schools could do no better than to command their pupils to listen to this record of "The Importance of Being Earnest." It is as good a lesson in the playing of high comedy as can be found. Certainly it is superior to the models encountered in book form; superior if for no other reason than that it is high comedy itself, in tone, in pauses, in inflections, in actuality. It is high comedy unobscured by theory, illustrated by actors rather than written about by critics.

Naturally I kept hearing this record above the voices of Mr. Gielgud and Margaret Rutherford when this same proposal scene was reached in the enchanting production of "Earnest" at the Royale. Mr. Gielgud was playing with the identical sparkle, style, and feigned diffidence which had made his Worthing a delight both on the record and when in wartime London I had seen him acting in Wilde's comedy opposite Edith Evans.

But I missed Miss Evans sorely. Without her the game of ping-pong had become a game of solitaire; the duet a solo. Miss Rutherford is a portly Lady Bracknell. She has size, at least, in her favor. She fills the eye even if she does not fill the bill. She sails in—begloved and boa'd, a parasol in her hand, her lorgnette poised, with an aviary as a hat—a great brown mass of matronliness.

The lines she speaks are as happy examples of Oscariana as can be found. Wilde never wrote more hilariously than when he was having his fun at the expense of elderly titled women. Regardless of the names he chose for them, whether the Duchess of Berwick in "Lady Windermere's Fan" or Lady Bracknell in "The Importance of Being Earnest," they were the same women. They had the same arrogance, the same malice, and were twins in foolishness. They mobilized Oscar's best gifts. So actorproof does their absurdity seem on the printed page that they tempt readers to surrender to an old and dangerous fallacy, and believe that behind the footlights these harridans are certain to "play" themselves.

That they too must be acted, Miss Rutherford makes clear. She makes this as clear as Miss Evans demonstrated by her Lady Bracknell that she was the ideal person to play them. Miss Rutherford speaks distinctly the wonderful lines which fall her way. She stops, however, with uttering them. She does not point, accentuate, underscore, or project them. She parrots Wilde without adding to him in terms of her own craft.

WHAT subtracts from her performance is the total immobility of her face. Miss Rutherford never changes her expression. Or if she does, the changes fail to register. She wins laughs. Yet these laughs are not won by her so much as they are won for her by her lines. She lacks Miss Evans's grand manner. She seems nearer to a village parsonage than to Mayfair. Her Lady Bracknell belongs to a county family rather than to the metropolitan nobility. Where Miss Evans glittered like a diamond, Miss Rutherford shines like paste. At her best she is mediocre, where Miss Evans throughout was perfection.

In "The Importance of Being Earnest" Wilde came into his own as a writer for the theatre. His earlier plays—"Lady Windermere's Fan," "A Woman of No Importance," and "An Ideal Husband"—lived strangely double lives. In their plotting they were melodramas borrowed from the French; in their wit they were unmistakably Wildean. We may nowadays smile at what is old-fashioned and stilted in their serious moments, but what we cherish in them is their nonsense.

Fortunately, when he came to write "The Importance of Being Earnest," Wilde was himself anything but earnest. Farce was his only thesis, laughter his sole problem, wit his single objective. Employing the kind of fable dear to W. S. Gilbert's heart, Oscar converted it into pure Wilde. Not since Sheridan's distant day had

—*Vandamm.*

**"The constant patter of Oscar Wilde's paradoxes can—and at moments does—become as monotonous as rain falling on a tin roof."**

* *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST, by Oscar Wilde. Directed by John Gielgud. Decor by Motley. Presented by the Theatre Guild and John C. Wilson in association with H. M. Tennent, Ltd., of London. With a cast including John Gielgud, Margaret Rutherford, Robert Flemyng, Pamela Brown, Jane Baxter, Jean Cadell, John Kidd, and Richard Wordsworth. At the Royale Theatre.*



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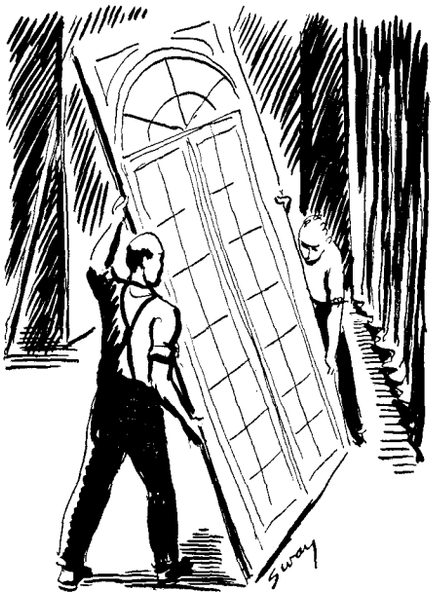

a farce-comedy blazed so brightly in the English-speaking theatre. Nor since Wilde's incarceration has another shone with this particular effulgence.

When "The Importance of Being Earnest" was new, Mr. Shaw was one critic who did not care for it greatly. "It amused me, of course," wrote he, "but unless comedy touches me as well as amuses me, it leaves me with a sense of having wasted my evening. I go to the theatre to be moved to laughter, not to be tickled or bustled into it." But the Mr. Shaw who was interested in promoting his own comedies at that time missed the point of Wilde's. To demand to be "touched" by an artificial comedy, farcical or otherwise, or to seek for humanity in "The Way of the World," "The Country Wife," or "Earnest," is to ask for the unintended no less than the impossible. Mr. Shaw seems to have been victimized by his own Puritanism. He made himself somewhat silly by his unwillingness to laugh for an evening at that which had no other purpose than laughter itself.

That Wilde labors and belabors his epigrams and lunacies, no one can deny. He was a wit who worked overtime. An eight-hour day might have helped him. An eight-hour night certainly would have. He strained and huffed and puffed to live up to his reputation in every line. The constant patter of his paradoxes can—and at moments does—become as monotonous as rain falling on a tin roof. But even when he is straining and his artifice is overcontrived, Wilde's brilliance cannot be dodged.

His wit, like his social attitude, is as much the product of his times as Edward VII's frock coat. This is why Mr. Gielgud and his fellow-players wisely act "Earnest" as a "period piece." They protect what is dated



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in it by inviting us to enjoy it because it is so. Thereby they permit us to relish the absurdities both of a society and a kind of theatre no longer current.

Mr. Gielgud's direction, like his own performance of Worthing, is as grave as it must be unless the joke is to be spoiled. One hint that the actors thought they were being strange, different, unnatural, or funny—and the jest would evaporate. One infiltration of humanity, and the farce-comedy would languish. It belongs in an hermetically sealed world of Wilde's own in which, though laughter must be heard, all heart-beats are inaudible.

Mr. Gielgud's actors go about their business of being silly with admirable sobriety. Undertakers could not be more solemn than they are. Their demeanor is a cross between a pavane

and a ritual. They are people made in the image of their tailors and their dressmakers. They walk the earth as "unnatchel" men and women. They exude superiority and live to talk. They come to grips neither with reality nor with those whose hands they shake. When they meet, they deign only to touch each other's fingertips.

Fine as is Mr. Gielgud's Worthing; agreeable as is Robert Flemyng's Algernon; passable enough as is Jane Baxter's Cecily; and excellent as is Jean Cadell's Miss Prism, the evening's best performance is Pamela Brown's Gwendolen. Miss Brown and the Spirit of High Comedy prove to be interchangeable. She has all the hauteur, the iciness, the elegance, the luster, and the lethal precision which one dreams of finding in such a part.

Great Britain in these troubled times may have lost much. But there is one thing, in addition to the moral fiber of her people, that nothing can take from her. That is, the ability of her better actors to play English comedy. In this skill, as Mr. Gielgud's "The Importance of Being Earnest" once again demonstrates delectably, they have no rivals. JOHN MASON BROWN.



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## UNWRITTEN CLASSICS

(*Continued from page 8*)

the Russian journalist Nicholas Notovitch found his apocryphal "Unknown Life of Jesus Christ" in 1887. He asserted that, while he was recovering from a broken leg at the Himis lamasery, the Chief Lama had read the work to him. Investigation disclosed that the Chief Lama of Himis had never heard of Notovitch, and the basis for the broken-leg story was that Notovitch had been treated for toothache at the hospital in nearby Leh. These disclosures did not stop the "Unknown Life" from being reprinted as a great discovery in 1926.

And just recently a waggish Baker Street Irregular in the employ of the Scribner's Book Store, New York, advertised, as part of a collection of Holmesiana, the following rarity: "Sherlock Holmes, 'An Inquiry into the Nature of the Ashes of Various Tobaccos,' Tibet: Privately Printed, 1893, $100." At last accounts he had received eight orders.

The most fertile recent creator of pseudobiblia was the late Howard Phillips Lovecraft, Providence recluse, prolific contributor to *Weird Tales*, and now the ikon of a small but ardent cult. Lovecraft was a man of many affectations, both personal and literary, and his writing is the subject of a considerable dispute. Admirers are satisfied that he gives them the *frisson* that is the *sine qua non* of a good horror story. Detractors criticize his imitation of the more obvious tricks of Poe, Machen, and Dunsany, his sameness of plot and continual use of of words like "weird," "horrible," and "blasphemous."

Lovecraft's favorite, and that of his readers, is the accursed "Necronomicon." This was the only pseudobook from which he gave considerable quotations, such as:

> Nor may those who pass ever return, for in the vastnesses transcending our world are shapes of darkness that seize and bind. The Affair that shambleth about in the night, the evil that defieth the Elder Sign, the Herd that stand watch at the secret portal each tomb is known to have, and that thrive on that which groweth out of the tenants thereof:—all these Blacknesses are lesser than HE WHO guardeth the Gateway: HE WHO will guide the rash one beyond all the worlds into the Abyss of unnamable devourers. For HE is 'UMR AT-TWAIL, the Most Ancient One, which the scribe rendereth as THE PROLONGED OF LIFE.

Lovecraft wrote a "History and Chronology of the Necronomicon," printed in the Lovecraftian collection, "Beyond the Walls of Sleep." This

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little spoof tells how the book was written (as "Al Azif") by the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred about 730. It was translated into Greek by Theodorus Philetas, into Latin by Olaus, and into English by John Dee. Now the Arabic text has disappeared; the Greek is only rumored; and two or three copies of the Latin are known to exist. Abdul, incidentally, came to a bad end, being devoured in broad daylight by an invisible entity.

Lovecraft was so successful in evoking these ghosts of books that libraries and bookstores were perplexed by requests for copies. People even went hunting for Lovecraft's "Misakontic University" at "Arkham, Mass.," whose library was supposed to harbor a "Necronomicon." Since Lovecraft's death in 1937 some of his friends and fellow pulp-writers, notably August Derleth and Clark Ashton Smith, have carried on the Cthulhu mythos and its pseudobiblography in *Weird Tales*. Hence this body of pseudobiblia seems destined to a long and active life.

Once the "Necronomicon" almost materialized. A few years ago a leading contemporary author of creepy-crawlies, Manly Wade Wellman, entered a little basement book shop in New York, where books teetered on sagging shelves and dust lay millimeters thick on everything. The proprietress, a little old woman who looked as if she might take off on a broomstick any minute, asked him what he wanted.

As a mild joke, Wellman answered: "Do you by any chance have a copy of the 'Necronomicon'?"

"Why yes, heh heh," cackled the crone, "right—about—here!"

It was a false alarm, but the incident gave Wellman quite a turn. Like an enterprising author, he used it in a story, "The Letters of Cold Fire" (*Weird Tales*, May 1944). In the story the book was really on the shelf.

If somebody could cross the hair that, perhaps, divides the false and true and bring back a tangible copy of the "Necronomicon," he could be very confident of abundant sales.

For the bibliophile who cannot afford incunabula, I recommend the collection of pseudobiblia. No form of literary accumulation is cheaper.

But what I really want to know is: how does one not write an unwritten classic that will make as much stir as those described herein; and having not written it, how does one collect royalties on the copies that were not sold?

*Teacher, editor, engineer, patent expert, free-lance writer—L. Sprague de Camp has authored a patent textbook, three novels, forty-odd magazine stories and articles popularizing science. "The Unwritten Classics" is part of a book on magic, witchcraft, and occultism Henry Holt will publish.*

# *Your Literary I.Q.*

By Howard Collins

LIMERICK GEOGRAPHY

Prof. Harlan Hungerford of Miami University submits the last lines of thirty-three well-known limericks and asks you to name the geographical locations at end of their first lines. Allowing three points for each correct answer, a score of sixty is par, sixty-nine is very good, and seventy-eight or better is excellent. Answers are on page 29.

1. And a smile on the face of the tiger.
2. To a soft oleaginous mutter.
3. He replied, "I can't say, for I rent 'em."
4. And eloped with the Mother Superior.
5. She slipped through the straw and fell in.
6. "I dislike what I *fancy* I feel."
7. "I've bitten myself underneath!"
8. "Or the rest will be wanting one too!"
9. But the other won several prizes.
10. "But God knows you're stronger than I am!"
11. He done what he didn't intend.
12. One ear, seven teeth,—and his life.
13. And straightway went at it again.
14. "But think of the money I save!"
15. She knew what it meant—but she went.
16. And prays to be took to the altar.
17. But he had a good time of it, didn't he?
18. "But I wish you would take off your armour."
19. "And bigamy, sir, is a crime."
20. And took 'em both off and was sick in 'em.
21. "You don't know how prolific my hen is."
22. And the tickets are two for a penny.
23. "But I terribly fear being shutnam!"
24. Of the bishop as he was confirming 'em.
25. It also was printed in Braille.
26. Front page, sport section, and all.
27. The rest of the story's improper.
28. Or open it up like a quoit.
29. And his rifle went off in the air.
30. But the horrible double ontong.
31. Who suffers, I fear, by comparison.
32. "I'm so glad that it wasn't a hornet!"
33. "But I try to get as many words in the last line as I possibly can."

# Significant Years

*THE LIGHT HEART. By Elswyth Thane. New York: Duell, Sloane, & Pearce, Inc.* 1947. 341 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by NANCY G. CHAIKIN

IF you can get through the tangle of families, you will find, in this novel of the early nineteen-hundreds, the story of a young writer, the great love of her life, and the ways in which it clouds other potential romances until, at last, triumphing over two sorry marriages (hers and his) and many years, it brings her back to him. But the love story is not nearly so important as are the author's glimpses into an England and a Germany headed toward World War I—as she lays her blame on the arrogant Deutschlanders. Miss Thane effects such explorations through the fortunes of the beautiful and unfortunate Rosalind, whose aspiring Mamma has married her off to a Prussian prince. And while she does not uncover anything particularly new, she manages, in an occasional sharp moment, to throw some interesting light on the nature of the complicated factors which precipitated that war.

The author is given to a good many clichés; and her characters, somehow, never arouse much sympathy. I must say here, too, that Phoebe's return to the States and a half-hearted marriage, at the expense of her deep love for Oliver, was never very convincing. Certainly, at any rate, when she changed her mind, she might have sent Oliver a cable, instead of the too-late letter. Nevertheless, if you are willing to wade through an incredible number of blood-relations, and lesser characters, and suspend a good deal of disbelief, you are likely to find, in this novel of significant years, some fairly absorbing reading.



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# Giftedness and Psychosis

*THE MIND AND DEATH OF A GENIUS. By David Abrahamsen, M.D. New York: Columbia University Press.* 1946. 194 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by BERTRAM D. LEWIN, M.D.

AT THE age of twenty-three, Otto Weininger, the protagonist of this psychiatric study, offered as a doctoral dissertation and then had published his extraordinary book "Sex and Character." While the amazed intellectual world was still reading the copies fresh from the printer, Weininger further added to its fame or notoriety by committing suicide. Since then, the case of Weininger has been of interest to many psychiatrists and others who like to concern themselves with the problem of genius and its relation to mental unbalance. Dr. Abrahamsen is the latest of these.

Weininger's fame or, one might still say, notoriety rests on "Sex and Character." Weininger is often compared, by Dr. Abrahamsen, too, to a meteor for the bright splash his life created. But the book reminds one much more of those gaudy fair-ground Taj Mahals, destined for a brief hour to be imposing and grandiose and then to be forever rubble. Its guiding idea is simple: in every man there is a certain percentage of woman; in every woman there is a certain percentage of man. Working with this formula, Weininger derived not only a psychology and a biology, but an esthetic and an ethic as well, arguing fantastically and with copious footnotes. His main concern was not to apply the principle of bisexuality clinically or biologically, but to introspect out onto paper what was the ideal of masculinity and what the ideal of femininity.

With a misogyny rarely equaled, unless by Strindberg, who congratulated him warmly on his views, Weininger invented perhaps the most unattractive picture of woman ever presented in a serious book; and how this misogyny arose is still unknown, even after this latest book. Dr. Abrahamsen remarks that Weininger's mother to a large extent served as the unflattered model of the "mother type"—one of the feminine ideals—and it is possible that some other woman of his early environment served as the other type, the "prostitute." Doubtless, his overestimation of his gifted father and of himself led him to his exaggerated preference for the male ideal as he outlines it. It is interesting to learn, as Dr. Abrahamsen did by correspondence with Freud, that Weininger may have gotten the idea of bisexuality from a friend who was one of Freud's patients. This is a new and previously unpublished fact. But Freud referred to "Sex and Character" as a "rotten book" and was unimpressed by Weininger's views on hysteria.

Except for such interesting newly turned up facts, it cannot be said that this book gives one much insight into Weininger. It is probably true, as Dr. Abrahamsen says, that Weininger's life ended in a schizophrenic event, his suicide. But so little is assured as to the essential facts of Weininger's life, or even as to the most outstanding clinical symptoms, that anything propounded must be in the nature of guesswork. His relatives and good friends not only contradict each other in their statements about him, but even themselves at different times. Nothing is known of his real sex life, although he was generally known to feel (and so stated) that he "could not love." The inferences that Dr. Abrahamsen makes as to early sexual trauma remain a pure theoretical guess, and not an entirely convincing one. Nor are several suggestions as to what might have been the case in any way substantiable from what is known.

Dr. Abrahamsen deserves our thanks for the new facts which his assiduous inquiries have netted us, but to the tangled problem of giftedness and its relation to psychosis they furnish little solution.


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# Transfiguration in the Balkans

*EUROPEAN CROSSROADS. By Ilya Ehrenburg. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1947. 177 pp. $2.*

Reviewed by LEIGH WHITE

ILYA EHRENBURG, the Soviet Union's leading propagandist, tends to judge the Balkan countries on the basis of (1) how many "Fascists" they have shot and (2) how hard they can make their people work. Bulgaria is his favorite at the moment, because it is "a splendid example of the fact that hate for fascism is a genuinely constructive force, especially when people hate their home-grown Fascists." He bemoans the Bulgars' "unjust fate," not because of the excessive reparations the Soviet Union has exacted, but because the Bulgars have not been properly admired for shooting 2,025 "guilty Fascists" to date.

Carping Americans and Englishmen fail to appreciate "the spirit of liberty that pervades the country"; instead we unjustly criticize the Communists for confining so many people in concentration camps. In Ehrenburg's opinion, "too much attention is being paid abroad to groups opposing the Fatherland Front." Such opponents, he explains, are merely "intellectuals who let themselves be fooled by abstract talk of 'liberty'." Elsewhere in the same book he writes that "liberty is best appreciated by one who has spent years behind prison bars. . . ."

He applauds the state-controlled unions in all the sovietized countries for their efforts to "re-establish work discipline," thanks to which "the worker works harder than ever." And hard work, preferably in a labor battalion, is as beautiful in Ehrenburg's eyes as it was in the eyes of Robert Ley.

Ehrenburg is enchanted with Yugoslavia, too, because, as in Nazi Germany, the faces of its marching youth battalions are "radiant with the kind of expression one sees on the faces of the transfigured." Of Yugoslavia's election, Ehrenburg is pleased to report that he saw "a people march to the polls in the same spirit with which it marched to battle." He was positively intoxicated with all the parades, and his heart leapt up at the shouts of Ti-to, Ti-to, Ti-to, which are of course quite different from the shouts of Fran-co, Fran-co, Fran-co, though it would be extremely "reactionary" to ask him why.

Forgetting for a moment the delights of regimented toil, he writes that he has "nowhere seen so many cheerful people as in Split," though in

Ilya Ehrenburg's heart lifted at "shouts of Ti-to, Ti-to, Ti-to, which are quite different from Fran-co, Fran-co, Fran-co."

Skoplje, too, he found deliriously happy people. They are indignant, even so, he says, because the evil Greeks are "endeavoring to transform (*sic*) southern Macedonia into a Greek province." Poor Salonika, bereft of the protection of the Soviet fleet!

Ehrenburg's heart bleeds for the poor Italians suffering under the Anglo-American yoke in Trieste, and he compares their plight with the bliss of those Italians who have not yet escaped from such ancient centers of Slavic culture as Pola and Abazzia. He asks the reader, "Why shouldn't Abazzia be a paradise? The Italian proprietor of the Hotel Regina showed his resourcefulness by putting out a sign announcing the new name: Hotel Moscow."

In this exceedingly slender volume, which is apparently a gleaning of Ehrenburg's most brilliant dispatches to *Izvestia*, he utters similar words of wisdom about Rumania, Albania, Czechoslovakia, and the Nuremberg trials. He writes, as usual, in words of two syllables, and in a style that is perfectly adapted to the demands of Soviet censorship. His book, as a result, is superficial, inaccurate, maudlin, and unenlightening.

## *Clock Tower*

By Edith Warner Johnson

THE cool bell tones of the clock
Sounding the hour,
Ring out clear and remote
From the great tower.

Falling like seeds of time
Measured and sown
In vast furrows of darkness,
The fruit unknown.



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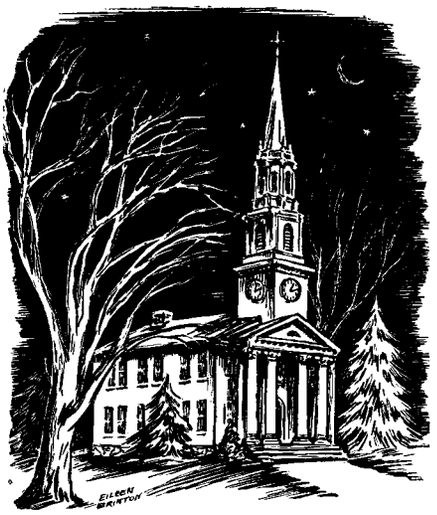
# Judgment Day for the Church




*WHAT'S WRONG WITH RELIGION? By Karl B. Justus. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce.* 1946. 102 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by GUY EMERY SHIPLER

THIS brief volume should help blast both clergymen and laymen out of their complacency. It might well have borne the title used by Dick Shepherd, famous vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London, some years ago, "The Impatience of a Parson," though Mr. Justus's impatience is often too restrained. Here is a Methodist chaplain who has come back from the war, where his men were dying, as he says, for some sort of a neighborly world, to find the churches still divided into all sorts of sectarian fragments. So he has developed an "obsession" through which he has determined to give his full time to "promoting unity and better understanding among the peoples of the world."

The title of the book is unfortunate, for what the author is condemning is not religion but the church. His reason for using the words "religion" and "church" interchangeably is hardly adequate—because the church is the "visible expression" of religion—and the title tends to add to that confused thinking characteristic of most discussions in this field. Mr. Justus would no doubt agree that the divisions in the churches are due chiefly to theologians, who follow stereotype patterns set in the days before the tools of modern Biblical scholarship were available, and to small-minded, uninformed laymen and clergymen who are unable to distinguish between medieval magic and religion, and have mistaken obscurantist traditions for truth. It is the results stemming from these traditions, substitutes for the religion of the Nazarene, which the author accents as powerful detriments to world understanding.

Having served in five major landings in the South Pacific, Mr. Justus has much to say about the returned soldier and his relation, if any, to the church. The Protestant serviceman, he says, has been impressed by the unity of the Roman Catholic Church and wonders why Protestantism cannot represent a similar unity. Yet the author, who defines bigotry as thinking "our way is the only way," asks how the Catholic church "can preach tolerance and warn against bigotry," while it insists that it "is the only true church." He believes that servicemen, after their experience with men of all religions and none, will not react favorably to a Protestant church shot through with class distinctions; that eighty per cent of the sermons preached leave these men cold; that they will not be won to the church by excitement over different denominational methods of administering the communion or baptism. He will be convinced that churches have put too much emphasis on sins of the flesh and "under-emphasized the sins of society." Mr. Justus doesn't believe that servicemen can be fooled into the conviction that refraining from dancing, going to the theatre, or taking a drink marks one as "religious," while the churches which set up such standards indulge in race discrimination.

Such petty concepts are put in strong contrast to the religion of Jesus and what should be the major job of the church, that of bringing about a brotherhood of all races and nations —that brotherhood so effectively emphasized by Paul on Mars's hill when he spoke of God as having "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth." Because he holds this unifying conception of religion the author asserts that he is "strongly in favor of some kind of world organization or government," which can never be inspired by a church controlled by ecclesiastical machinery and bent on saving itself rather than society.

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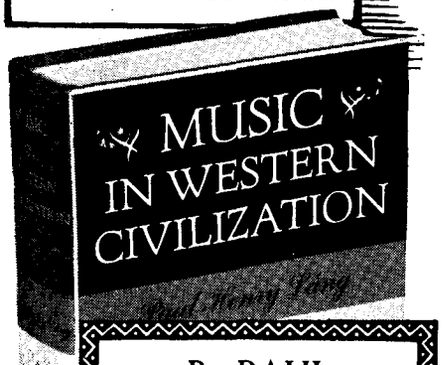


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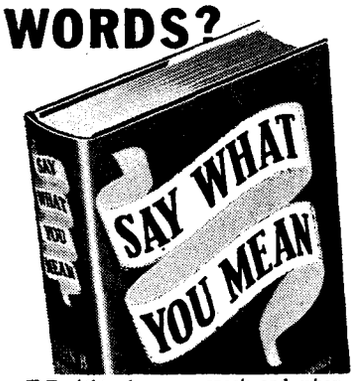


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# NEW EDITIONS

AMERICANS who know nothing of Hermann Hesse, 1946 winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, may somewhat diminish their ignorance by reading "Steppenwolf," first published here in a translation by Basil Creighton in 1929, and now reissued (Holt, $2.75). This philosophical fiction, written in the German Expressionist manner which flourished after the First World War, is sometimes brilliant, sometimes bewildering, always interesting.

Goethe's Faust cried, *"Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach, in meiner Brust."* Hesse's Harry Haller, who conceives of himself as half-man, half-wolf, learns that he, and Faust no less, is guilty of an unwarranted simplification. Not even an idiot is so simple that he can be explained as the sum of two or three elements. "Harry consists of a hundred or a thousand selves, not of two. His life oscillates, as everyone's does, not merely between two poles, such as the body and the spirit, the saint and the sinner, but between thousands and thousands." Harry's story, in which Hesse's imagination riots, is a tale of increasing self-knowledge, of progressive enlightenment. Harry learns that the man who longs for a harmonious world "on the other side of time and appearances" is eager to relieve himself of his own personality; while the world which he desires actually exists only within himself. He learns that, just as a primitive radio distorts music that is beautiful in its origins, "just so does life, the so-called reality, deal with the sublime picture-play of the world and make a hurley-burley of it." The last lesson which his instructors impress upon him is the necessity of laughter at "the gallows-humor of life."

Having run his strange hurdle-race, made tricky by magic, and full of dark and lovely doings, Harry feels that "all the hundred thousand pieces of life's game" are now in his pocket; and he is keen to begin the game afresh. When "Steppenwolf" was conceived, the gallows-humor of life was strident in Germany. It is strident there again—and everywhere else on earth.

To turn from Hesse to Stendhal is to step from mystical obscurity into bright daylight. "On Love" is again available in the Black and Gold Edition (Liveright, $2.49), in the translation supervised some twenty years ago by C. K. Scott-Moncrieff, and it repays a second or third reading as generously as it does a first. Stendhal's observations of and reflections upon love in various lands, climes, and ages are original, almost always shrewd, and invariably entertaining. It was a subject on which he lavished much research and thinking, crowding the results into a most readable book which is a happy jumble; ideal for the night table, since one can put a finger between any two pages and be nearly sure that one will come up with a plum. Love dominates all, but the author finds time to consider such subjects as Scottish Sundays, Moorish architecture in Andalusia, female education, German philosophical systems ("which are really obscure and badly written poetry"), and virtue: "I myself honor by the name of virtue the habit of doing irksome things which are useful to others." As for love in the United States, our author found it, like artists and writers, lamentably lacking. He believed, rather surprisingly, that a United States citizen was an entirely rational being, primarily intent on avoiding discomfort. Stendhal was on surer ground on his own side of the Atlantic.

First published here in 1938, "The British People," by G. D. H. Cole and Raymond Postgate, has been brought down to date to cover the period from 1746 to 1946 (Knopf, $5.). Here is an immensely informative, solidly useful, and richly statistical economic history of a country that has made great social strides during two centuries, but where, still, in 1946: "One-half of one per cent of the receivers of income got sixteen per cent of the total income of the nation. One in a hundred of the adults who died left over half the total property." . . . Reading "The Poems of Robert Frost" (Modern Library, $1.10), I am more than ever conscious of the homely humor which pervades Frost's best work, and find myself lingering over this from the author's new introduction: "The freshness of a poem belongs absolutely to its not having been thought out and then set to verse as the verse might be set to music." . . . To Penguin Books, add Joseph Conrad's "Almayer's Folly"; to Bantam Books, Betty Smith's "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn"; to Pocket Books, Daphne Du Maurier's "Frenchman's Creek" (25c each).

BEN RAY REDMAN.



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# HEARING THINGS

## L'AFFAIRE KOUSSEVITZKY

A FEW weeks ago the newspapers carried a rather curious item: Dr. Serge Koussevitsky had petitioned the courts to restrain Mr. Moses Smith, author of a new biography of the celebrated conductor of the Boston Symphony, and his publishers, from distributing the book. Well, I thought, "Koussy," as he is affectionately called in and around Boston, is getting touchy in his old age and wants to prevent any "unauthorized" person from prying into his life. It would seem to be of no particular importance for the world to know all about the life of a conductor, who, after all, is an ephemeral personage. Heaven knows, we do not pay much attention to the life of great creative artists who give us immortal works, until they are dead of privation and neglect, after which they make good copy. It is amusing, though, to think that a man in public life can be so naïve as to think he can stifle legitimate criticism by legal injunctions. But when the newspapers, and with them the *SRL*, received an ominous note from "The Doctor's" lawyers, warning them not to undertake any discussion of Mr. Smith's "Koussevitzky," that was another matter. Clearly, the old wizard of the orchestra must have hypnotized even his lawyers for them to forget the elementary rights of a free press. As was to be expected, the suit was thrown out of court; still, I had to read the book in order to find out the terrible things it must contain to elicit such an unusual step, especially since one of our leading New York dailies, by habit totally and uncritically at Koussevitzky's feet, braved the wrath of the gods and came forth with a review, though an ultra-cautious one. But the book proved to be thoroughly engrossing, and it is hard to understand what the Lord of Tanglewood found in it so utterly objectionable. I, for one, was converted from a skeptic into an admirer. Surely no subject of a biography can ask for more.

It has always been something of an enigma in professional circles—which include some of our more discerning critics—how Koussevitzky achieved his eminence in the musical world. Everyone who has ever played in an orchestra will tell you that his beat is lacking in meaning; only years of familiarity with his men makes it possible for him to exact such admirable precision from his orchestra. Rumors about his limited ability to read scores were persistent and were substantiated by the presence in his retinue of a score-reading *pianiste de la cour*, as well as by the groping way he used to start his rehearsals. When he performs a classic symphony the audience hears tempi, dynamics, and phrasings that are at variance with what we know about eighteenth-century music, while a symphony of Brahms, although glowing in sonority, is likely to offend the sensitive listener by Koussevitzky's constant underscorings, the relentless opulence of sound, and a preoccupation with timbres rather than with symphonic continuity. Still, he "got results," which is the only thing that counts, and undoubtedly he is one of our great conductors. Since our great orchestras are usually run by wealthy amateurs whose judgment in matters musical is easily influenced by irrelevant factors, Koussevitzky's appointment in 1924, sight unseen, was one of those things. The miracle of it is that he made good, and it is precisely the amazing story of this metamorphosis from a man who "at fifty really began to learn how to conduct" to the imperious artist that he is now, past seventy, that makes his life story such a fascinating experience. Those of us who have never heard Koussevitzky play the bass fiddle could never guess from his conducting alone that he was an incomparable artist on the behemoth of instruments. Even the members of the Boston Symphony who, after serving under such peerless chiefs as Muck and Monteux, were not a little contemptuous of the man who at the time of his debut in Boston was in fact an amateur conductor, changed their opinion when they first heard him play his ungainly instrument.

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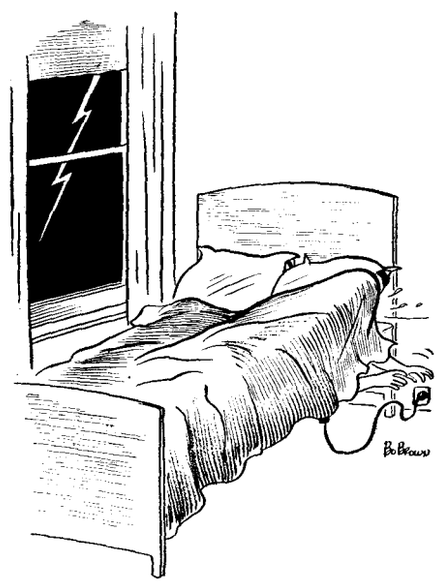
Koussevitzky's life resembles a fairy tale. The couple repaired to Berlin where the ex-bass-fiddler of the Bolshoi Theatre quietly began his preparations for a different career. Curiously enough, this indefatigable worker who lived for music alone, who seems to have accepted every challenge, approached the task of the conductor from the wrong direction. Yet he started his new studies with invaluable advantages: he was not only an exceptional virtuoso on an intractable instrument, but familiar with most of the others. (In our day the pianist-conductor is the rule rather than the exception.) His theoretical training was, however, scant—and has remained incomplete. Instead of engaging in thoroughgoing studies, he hired a pianist who played the scores while he conducted. The composition under study was repeated by the player until Koussevitzky worked out all the gestures and — incidentally—familiarized himself with the score. Decidedly a most curious and original method, and one about ten times as slow and inefficient as the old-fashioned quiet and thorough preliminary study of the score. This method, to which Koussevitzky adhered far into his Boston career, was responsible for many of his shortcomings. It is indeed extraordinary that he managed to master a large repertory studded with difficult contemporary works. Having hired a pianist, he next hired a small orchestra for putting into actuality his sham conducting, and in January 1908 he was ready for his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic. There began his real career. Somewhat later he returned to Russia, where he cut a swath in the old and established musical life with his energetic activities. A characteristic and most engaging trait of the future idol of Back Bay made itself felt right at the beginning: Koussevitzky was passionately interested in modern music and never lost an opportunity to champion its cause. He even founded a publishing firm devoted to the publication of the works of contemporary Russian composers.



THIS curious man was all wrapped up in music and his capacity for active music-making was phenomenal. Hiring a steamer he took his orchestra down the Volga, bringing first-class symphonic music to people who never expected to be treated to such wondrous things. And this was not a mere stunt or gesture, it was a generous cultural deed, done without the benefit of advertising ballyhoo. The Revolution put an end to his Russian career.

Although unmolested, he decided to leave and took up his residence in Paris, the traditional abode of political and artistic refugees. He was sufficiently well known abroad, and Mme. Koussevitzky's family fortune was distributed sagaciously; therefore it was not long before Koussevitzky had firmly ensconced himself. It was from "Concerts Koussevitzky" that, in the best of American traditions, he was hired for the post in Boston. Judge Cabot, president of the trustees of the Boston Symphony, casually asked an unnamed lady who, according to Mr. Smith, was "intimately associated with the Boston musical scene," to be on the lookout for a likely conductor to succeed Pierre Monteux. Upon her report from Paris Koussevitzky was engaged. Fortunately, unlike other appointees engaged under similar circumstances, Koussevitzky did not turn out to be a dud, but this was entirely due to the man's incredible artistic courage and integrity. It was at this point in the story that my conversion took place and my hat came off, for the ensuing drama was one of agony and despair sufficient to defeat much greater musical personalities than a half-trained and relatively inexperienced conductor then hitting fifty; and from it Koussevitzky emerged victorious.

He was not equipped to cope with the requirements of a regular symphonic repertory. Up to this time he had been a sort of *ad hoc* conductor, with plenty of time to prepare his concerts. Then too, he was a kind of specialist with a repertory of his own. The classics he did not really know, although he conducted them, but he did very well with modern Russian and French composers, and with such other more or less unrelated items as struck his fancy. He was now confronted with a schedule of concerts the number and variety of which would tax even the abilities of his predecessor, a musician and conductor



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of the first rank. At the end of the first year Koussevitzky was all but defeated; anyone else would have caved in under such handicaps, but he did not give up; gradually mastering the situation, he emerged as one of the great conductors of our time.

Here is a life as fantastic as fiction. Koussevitzky has many defects but he has great qualities also, and the latter are brought into the proper focus by Mr. Smith's essay. The eccentric Russian became an American citizen and an American institution. He was and is an autocrat, but so were most of the presidents of the Boston Symphony answering to illustrious and ancient New England names; he was, and to a certain degree still is, a musician of questionable taste and equipment, but of his devotion to music, an all-pervading and sincere devotion, there can be no question. More than that, he is a true, and one might say the only true friend of the American composer among foreign-born conductors. Throughout his life he battled for new music with a doggedness that has few parallels. In Boston, traditionally aloof from modern art, it took more than courage to take the battle line with Stravinsky, Prokofief, Bartók, Copland, Piston, Krenek, Harris, and all the others of the avant garde. His selections were arbitrary, and even though he ignored or dropped after one trial some very great musicians, he demonstrated a fine instinct for spotting budding talent, and the statistics at the end of "Koussevitzky" speak eloquently. There is no one who can rival this record. (And this is not said in disparagement of Howard Hanson's splendid achievements. He is his own boss and, somewhat tucked away in Rochester, he does not have to battle his way through uninformed boards of directors, trustees, and stonehearted managers.) Neither a bad press nor an icy public reception could dampen Koussevitzky's enthusiasm, and he blithely went on repeating any work he believed in.

The battle over, Mr. Koussevitzky and his lawyers might have done well to ponder these things before they cried libel. The Boston conductor's life and work add up to an imposing total. If they intend to uphold the picture of a Galahad of the baton as presented in a silly "official" biography by Lourié (1931) they are doing a disservice to the man whose greatest achievement was the heroic conquest of his own shortcomings. They have only succeeded in arousing intense interest in a book that, without all this fanfare, might have gone its way without attracting too much attention.

PAUL HENRY LANG.


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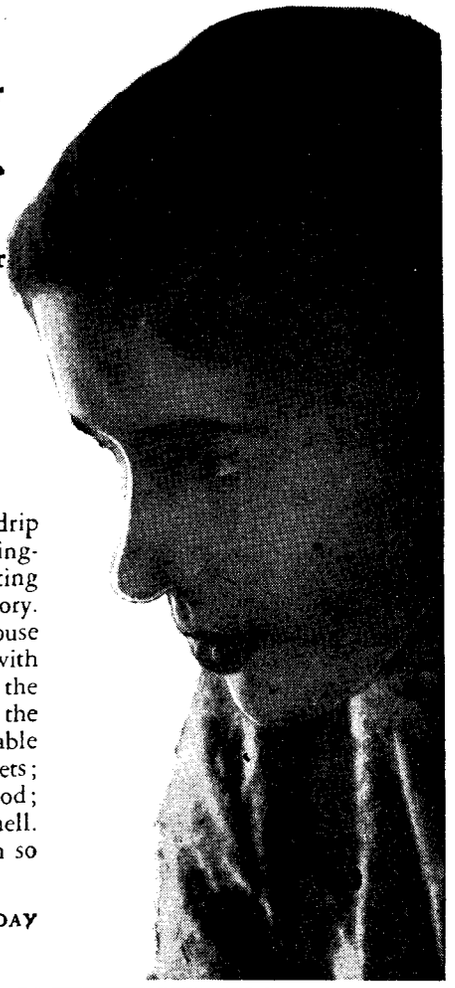

"HERE is Maude, rising all a-drip and arrow-swift like a kingfisher from a pool, with her twisting catch of fresh-remembered history. Then Florence, with her little house in the weed-choked gully, filled with bottles and dolls and maps of the heavens. They troop in, one after the other: Greta, with her improbable bears dancing in the charred streets; Mary Ann's dream of fatherhood; Henri's archaic midwestern knell. What is it they hide and cherish so jealously, charmingly?"

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| ROPE FOR AN APE<br>*Dana Chambers*<br>(Dial Press: $2.50) | Two gory bashings on Tuxedo country estate blamed on escaped orang-outang. War-corres. — and police — have different notions. | Luscious lassies and likkerish Lotharios add certain spice to cunningly compounded plot that calls for fuller explanation. | Flashy |
| DISPOSING OF HENRY<br>*Roger Bax*<br>(Harpers: $2.50) | Lovely London five-letter gal weds wealthy lepidopterist. Enter ardent Air Force officer. Spouse cleverly extinguished—but moorland police have doubts. | Sultry, well-characterized, and convincing run-with-hare-and-hunt-with-hounds opus, which vividly reveals imperfections of perfect crime. | Good—of its kind |
| MISS AGATHA DOUBLES FOR DEATH<br>*H. L. V. Fletcher*<br>(Messner: $2.) | Crippled American descendant of Welsh family meets frightened niece from old country. Aunt concocts plan to catch killer in Cymric hills. | Pleasant people, eerie and colorful background; unremitting suspense; and plot with terminal twist that is real surprise. | Thoroughly enjoyable |
| BY HOOK OR CROOK<br>*Anthony Gilbert*<br>(A. S. Barnes: $2.) | Nice old Englishwoman suspects skulduggery in death of Londoner and subsequent disposition of ward and governess. She writes Arthur Crook. | Criminals' identities pretty clear from outset. Crook's methods of catching them, although he can't save septuagenarian informant, characteristically clever. | Satisfying |
| THINK OF DEATH<br>*Frances and Richard Lockridge*<br>(Lippincott: $2.50) | Authors' first departure from Mr. and Mrs. North involves Connecticut killings of theatrical producer and secretary. Ex-OSS major forces slayer's hand. | Grade-A sleuthing, both by thoroughgoing pro. Capt. Heimrich and former cloak-and-dagger brass. Characters good and plotting inpeccable. | Diverting |
| APPOINTMENT AT NINE<br>*Doris Miles Disney*<br>(Crime Club: $2.) | Mystified girl goes to strange Conn. medico's office by appt., finds him slain, and herself chief suspect. Detective O'Neill unpuzzles it. | Diligent digging into past histories of parties involved and neat handling of time-element give O'Neill answer to well-tangled case. | Able baffler |
| FIND MY KILLER<br>*Manly Wellman*<br>(Farrar, Straus: $2.50) | Strange codicil to wealthy "suicide's" will excites his lawyer (fem.) and her sleuthing bodyguard Jackson Yates. They get their man. | Four murders and imminent extinguishment of husky, forthright, 'tec give yarn plentiful movement. Method of initial murder exceptionally clever. | Readable |
| THE CASE OF ERLE STANLEY GARDNER<br>*Alva Johnston*<br>(Morrow: $1.50) | How E. S. G., rising young Cal. lawyer, gave up bar to pal round with Perry Mason, Della Street, Donald Lam, etc., etc. | Satevepost articles plus 16 pages of photos and bibliography give entertaining portrait of famed whodunitor, his background and methods. | For Gardner enthusiasts |
| SHE DIED ON THE STAIRWAY<br>*Knight Rhoades*<br>(Arcadia House: $2.) | California detective and wife summoned to crazy mansion by aged lady who fears murder. It happens—but not to her. | Gallimaufry of garish characters and fantastic goings-on. Killer identifiable early in yarn—but tale has kind of horrible fascination. | Oh no! |
| GALLOWS FOR THE GROOM<br>*D. B. Olsen*<br>(Crime Club: $2.) | Enmities engendered by search for lost "apostle spoons" causes several deaths and almost finishes amateur detective A. Pennyfeather. | Plenty of spooky atmosphere, much action, double-barreled finish, interesting detection—and jacket blurb that is completely misleading. | Average |
| FIRESIDE MYSTERY BOOK<br>*Edited by Frank Owen*<br>(Lantern Press: $2.50) | Twenty stories, two factual, two by English authors, all about murder or associated violence. Authors include many well known names. | Six-possibly seven-of stories are worth reading: rather low anthologyrating. Majority of yarns new to collections, but not worth collecting. | Bottom of barrel |



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# The New Recordings

| COMPOSITION, PERFORMER, ALBUM NUMBER, NUMBER OF RECORDS | ENGINEERING | | PERFORMANCE AND CONTENT |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *Recording Technique* | *Surface* | |
| FAURE, TWELVE SONGS. Isabel French; Olympia di Napoli. Paul Dogereau, pf. Technichord T-7 (3 plastic) $7.50 | Fine high fidelity recording, except for occasional slight blasting in sudden loud parts. Lots of piano. Vinylite irregular. | AA to B+ (*plastic*) | Unusual item, prepared by Nadia Boulanger, champion of Faure. French has tiny, pure voice, beautiful control; Napoli (her protegee) similar, less impressive. |
| AMERICANA. Earl Robinson. Keynote K 132 (3 10″) | Very fine voice recording, smooth and with unusual "presence," | A— | Musically trifling, but Robinson's personality gratefully captured. |

## THE CLASSICAL GUITAR

FOR once this column recommends a non-existent recording, that should by all means be made before it is too late—an album by a unique virtuoso and a great musician, Andres Segovia. By his extraordinary technique and musical insight he has made of the guitar an instrument of the widest musical expressiveness on which Bach, Rameau, Scarlatti, and a hundred other classic masters can be played, as well as music by composers of more recent times and the best of music in the Spanish style.

Segovia has made a few recordings. One group was issued long ago and is now mostly unavailable. A year or so back a new Segovia album was brought out—of such atrocious quality in the recording and pressing as to be unfit to play. Segovia, still in top form, still unique, is yet to be heard on up-to-date records. Yet of all instruments the guitar is perhaps the most favored in the new higher fidelity recordings, as the above Keynote recording testifies. Its soft, wiry tone and its peculiarly delicate "personality" are now beautifully captured. Those who know the subtlety of instrumental color which Segovia produces can well imagine how much better his new records will be than the old. (On records Segovia is even more effective than in concert, where through lack of carrying power a good deal of his music is lost.)

Segovia's guitar repertory lies in two fields. He plays original music for the guitar (often dedicated to him) the best of which is in the Spanish vein, the worst of which, alas, is tripe, though tripe served in a beautiful manner. The greater part of his work however is in the form of transcriptions—and here a most interesting field opens up. The guitar is a close relative of the lute. For centuries the lute was of all stringed instruments the most popular; countless great composers wrote for it and innumerable works from the earliest times were transcribed back and forth for, and from, the lute repertory. As late as the time of Bach the instrument was still highly respected. Bach himself used it. Priceless collections of earlier music exist in transcriptions into lute notation (tablature). All this Segovia well knows and his own incredible contrapuntal guitar playing is closely modeled on the highly versatile lute technique.

When Segovia recently played his own transcription in Town Hall of Bach's Chaconne for unaccompanied violin he was thus carrying on a very old musical tradition, almost lost now, which has had enormous consequences in our musical past. Moreover he was actually playing this music more nearly as Bach conceived it than as it is now usually heard, on the modern violin. Bach's violin had an arched bow, with which whole chords could be played easily, using all the violin strings; on today's instrument with its stiff, straight bow the Chaconne is unplayable except in a strangled and tortured form. Segovia's one-handed guitar version with its full broken chords, fits Bach's conception and, as played by one of the great performing musicians of our time, it is a very profound and exciting reading.

What record company will take me up, and give us Segovia's Bach Chaconne, on the guitar, full high fidelity?

EDWARD TATNALL CANBY.


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# the Phoenix Nest

### TO CYRANO
(JOSÉ FERRER)

MASTER of Bergerac, at whose vast nose
Gascoynes recoiled but never dared to laugh,
Attend a moment to this epigraph:
If you could live again do you suppose
You would exchange your amplitude of nares
For the brief fictions that a lover marries,
Or pay the recompense that Beauty owes?
Would you abjure your poesy for prose?
Nay; many noses shorter by a meter
Signal a meagre love, a maudlin wit;
Better a Simon dead than Simon Peter;
Stay as you are and have the best of it.
I would not recommend that you presume
To wear a shorter nose, and lose your plume.

—EDWIN MCNEILL POTEAT.

* * *

I would call to your attention the new publishing concern that Harry Kemp has built up at Provincetown, Cape Cod, Mass. It is called The Provincetown Publishers. Last year the Town Crier conducted Harry up-along and down-along in Provincetown, meeting him first at the entrance from the dunes into the town, and placing upon his brows a winter-green wreath (in place of the antique laurel) which Harry hopes to make the national American poet's wreath. This spring he also hopes to start a magazine, *Provincetown Tide-Ways*. He has likewise prepared a counter-blast to Omar Khayyam entitled "Where Now Green Gardens," and he also resisted John Dos Passos's "violent, creamy punch" on New Year's Day. Louis Bromfield purchased five copies of Harry's "The Poet's Life of Christ," and I urge Phoenix Nest readers to go and do likewise. It is a book with some fine poetry in it. You will also receive a sea-gull's feather from Harry's place on the dunes. He recently sent me the following stave:

The great waves are surging,
A steady wind blowing,
The sea-gulls are crying,
My wood-stove is going;

There's health in my body,
And fire in my heart,
Which all comes from glowing
With great books apart.

Send in your requests and your checks to Harry Kemp at Box 507, Provincetown, Cape Cod, Mass., and keep a real poet writing poetry in his shack on the Cape Cod dunes!

* * *

### WHO IS A LIBERAL?

Who is a liberal? What is he
That some, not all, commend him?
And should one not consistently
Attack him or defend him?

Is he foul or is he fair?
A man of what condition?
It all depends, one is aware,
Upon the definition.

And this in turn (so very true
It calls for underlining)
Depends upon the point of view
Of him who is defining.

RICHARD ARMOUR.

* * *

I thank Maud M. Merrill of Hilltop Farm, Webb's Hill, Stamford, Conn., for telling me of her acting in London in Barrie's "Peter Pan," when she was playing "Tiger Lily" and understudying Peter. She then lived with Miss Pauline Chase, the star of "Peter Pan," who was beloved of Frohman and Barrie and Ellen Terry and was always "nipping off to tea or luncheon with them." Mrs. Merrill has sent me (to look at) the little book, "Peter Pan's Postbag: Letters to Pauline Chase," with illustrations by Albert Rothenstein, published by

William Heinemann in London in 1909. The book is made up from a large number of letters addressed by children to Pauline Chase when she played the part of Peter Pan. Some are facsimiles, showing the original childish orthography. At the end of the book is a map of "The Never Never Land" drawn by Beryl Hentschel and sent to Barrie. Also there is a deep and fascinating mystery concerning the introduction to the book, and I should think some enterprising publisher would republish it. Collectors take notice!

Furthermore, I have seen a charming reproduction of a portrait of Pauline Chase which she inscribed long ago to Mrs. Merrill's son Bertram, now today just home from being a Marine in the war. "Polly" Chase has three children of her own. It is far from Mrs. Merrill's intention to "debunk" Barrie—rather to recall a delightful era. In those days Noel Coward was in the Peter Pan company as a youngster, playing some kind of animal though it wasn't the famous alarm-clock crocodile, or Nana the dog-nurse. Could it have been one of the wolves?

* * *

Earle Walbridge became fifty-one exactly a week before I became sixty-one on Ground-hog Day. This mere youth, but avid book detective, tells me:

> A book collector after my own heart is Mr. Mannering, in Frederic Prokosch's new novel, "The Idols of the Cave" (Doubleday), who "liked books entirely for reasons of caprice; because they were set in a locality he knew, or touched some memory of his childhood, or because the hero's name was that of a friend, or because he had once met the author." ("Here's 'The Last Days of Pompeii,' the first novel I ever read. And 'East Lynne.' Believe it or not, it's worth a good $800. That's 'The Sign of the Four,' in the yellow case. I have all of Conan Doyle. 'Sherlock Holmes' is one of the monuments of English prose.") There is much of the usual Prokosch magic in this brilliant depiction of New York City, or regions thereof (though he does use the adjective "cool" ninety-nine times). A novel of the ballet, in part, it includes a respectful portrait of Alicia Markova. (And say, can you see Lady Mendl?) By coincidence, the hero has an affair with a ballerina named Ivanova; so does Edward Zoltan in Philip Freund's (shortly) previously published novel of that name. Mr. Freund, appreciatively reviewed in *SRL* and elsewhere, once told me that the movies so far had not gone to work on his novels or short stories, a Hollywood critic stating that they are "off-beat and classical." Not a bad tabloid criticism, and rather on the favorable side, I should say.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.



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*(Continued on page 38)*



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# PERSONALS

(Continued from page 37)

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# DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 679

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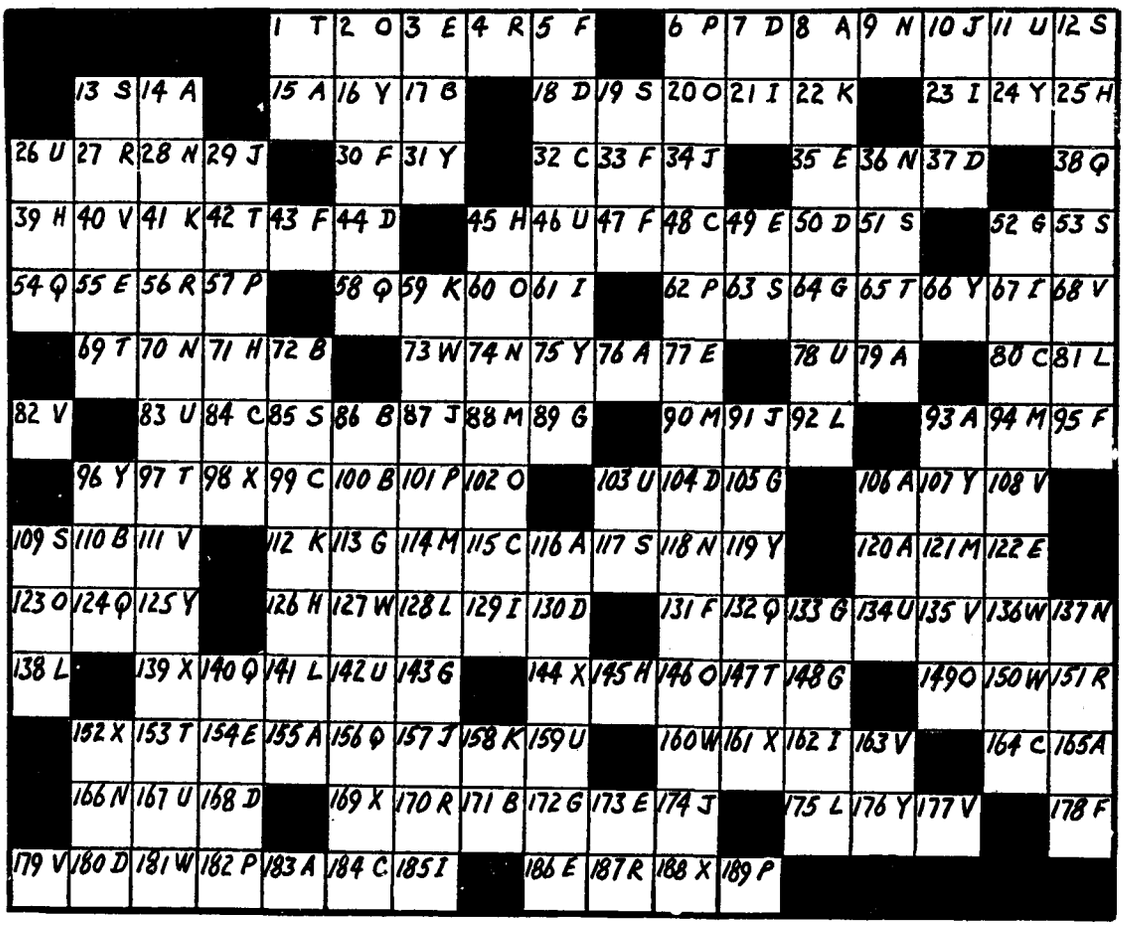
By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

| DEFINITIONS | WORDS |
|---|---|
| A. A bar of iron covered with leather or canvas, seized across the topmast shrouds or rigging above the top (2 wds.; Naut.). | 79 155 15 106 14 116 8 76 93 120 165 183 |
| B. Young conger eels. | 86 110 171 17 72 100 |
| C. Ordinary; commonplace (Colloq.). | 115 184 99 80 48 32 84 164 |
| D. English place on the Thames associated with June 15, 1215. | 130 180 50 7 44 18 168 37 104 |
| E. Seized and held in the custody of the law. | 49 3 186 35 55 173 122 77 154 |
| F. English playwright, author of "Journey's End" (1896- ). | 5 33 95 47 43 30 131 178 |
| G. British novelist, poet, playwright (1728-74). | 52 64 143 148 89 133 172 105 113 |
| H. With *Word I.*, title of a romance by Mrs. Humphry Ward (1888). | 39 126 45 71 25 145 |
| I. Surname of hero in title of book (with *Word H.*). | 61 185 21 23 129 162 67 |
| J. Conveys to a distance, or beyond the jurisdiction (Law). | 34 87 10 157 174 91 29 |
| K. An effeminate or overprecise man (prefaced by "Miss"). | 41 59 158 112 22 |
| L. One who has attained perfection esp. as shown by occult powers (Hinduism and Jainism). | 138 141 92 128 81 175 |
| M. American woman writer associated with Taos, New Mexico, and a coterie there (1879- ). | 88 114 94 90 121 |
| N. U. S. constitutional amendment in force Jan. 8, 1798. | 28 36 118 70 137 9 166 74 |
| O. Members of a Finnish type with broad, thickset figure and blond complexion (central Finland). | 123 146 60 2 20 149 102 |
| P. Beat, as a covert, for deer. | 182 6 62 189 101 57 |
| Q. English painter and etcher, regarded as a "supreme pictorial satirist" (1697-1764). | 58 54 38 132 156 140 124 |
| R. The "Lily maid of Astolat" (Tennyson). | 4 27 187 170 56 151 |
| S. Speaker of the House of Representatives, 1925-31; T.R.'s son-in-law. | 63 19 12 51 85 109 53 13 117 |
| T. Without cessation; tediously (3 wds.). | 69 153 42 1 97 65 147 |
| U. Probable author of an English poem with earliest known reference to Shakespeare (1594). | 11 134 83 142 78 46 159 167 26 103 |
| V. "Poetic" one of two works in Old Norse, (mythological and heroic songs; 2 wds.). | 82 135 68 108 179 163 111 177 40 |
| W. Pertaining to stone, esp. as material for implements or building. | 127 181 73 150 136 160 |
| X. Ropes or long leather thongs with running nooses. | 169 98 139 144 161 152 188 |
| Y. Famous Civil War play by Bronson Howard (1888). | 119 16 125 176 96 31 66 75 24 107 |

## DIRECTIONS

*To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.*

*When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).*




Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 15 of this issue.

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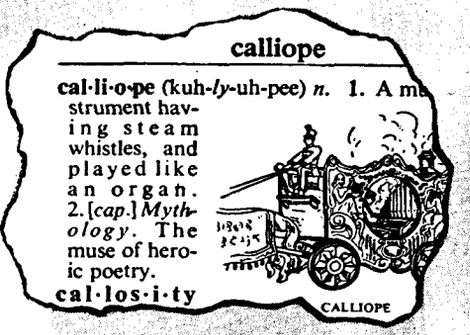


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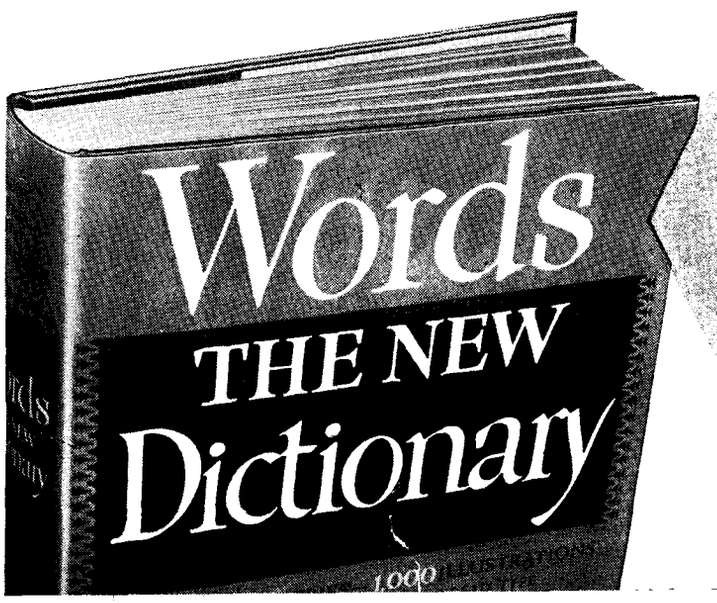


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